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WHITE DWARF

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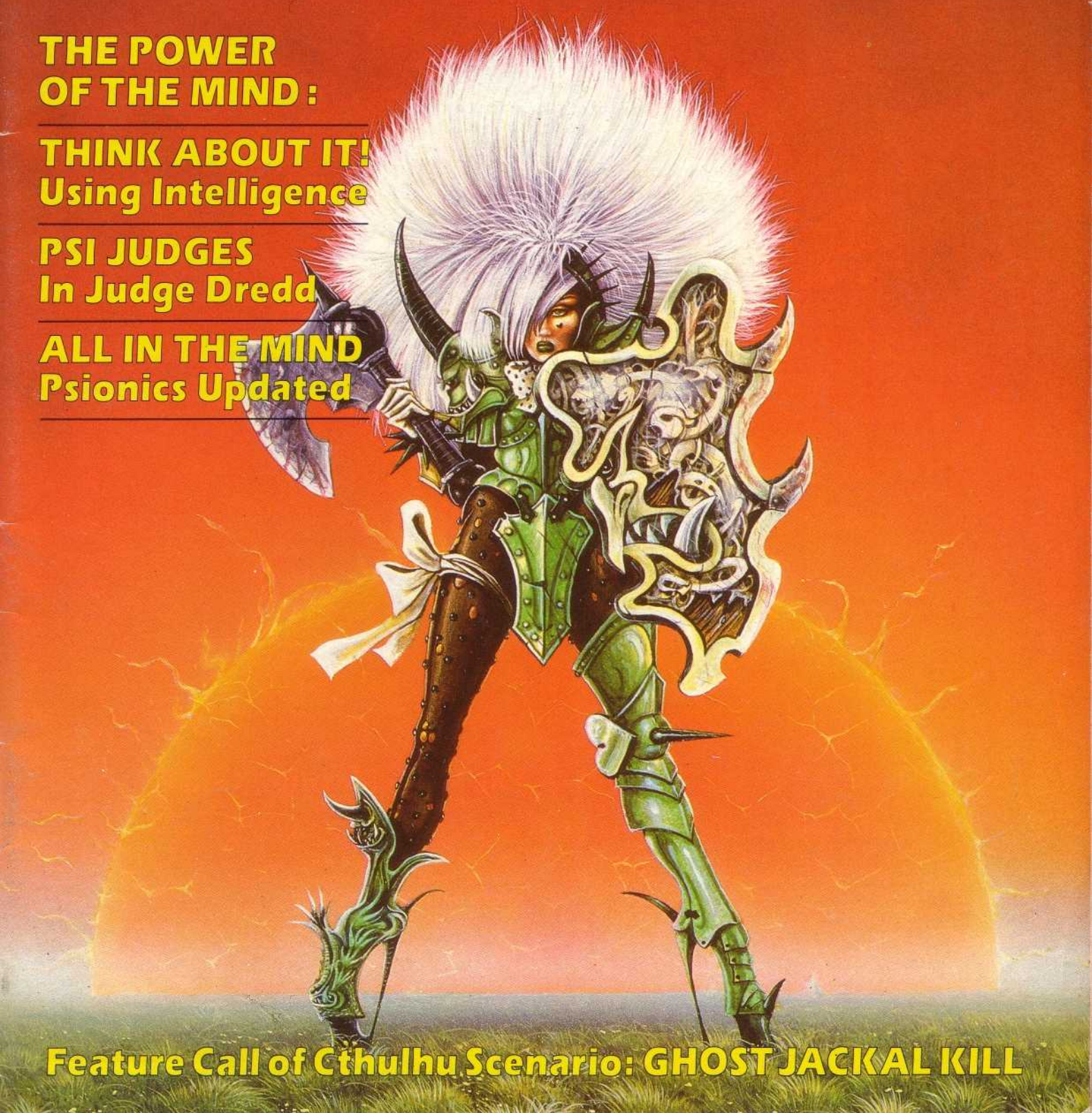
THE ROLE-PLAYING GAMES MONTHLY



THE POWER OF THE MIND:

THINK ABOUT IT!
Using Intelligence

PSI JUDGES
In Judge Dredd

ALL IN THE MIND
Psionics Updated

Feature Call of Cthulhu Scenario: GHOST JACKAL KILL

WHITE DWARF

ISSUE 78 JULY 1986

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We promised you changes, but it will take the sharp-eyed amongst you to notice one of the smaller changes to this month's edition of *White Dwarf*. On those advertisements which promote lead miniatures, there is now a small warning, intended to prevent figures being sold to that part of the public who might actually be harmed by the lead content. This an initiative that Bryan Ansell has taken, following the appearance of a Citadel ad in a magazine aimed at very young audience. In the end, we expect every manufacturer will have to start using these warnings, so we're happy to jump without being pushed, and try to work out some guidelines for this.

The other changes we hope to make will come in bit by bit, just as soon as I can find where Marshie hid all the files (I thought there weren't too many articles lying around). We think most of them will tend to be a bit more exciting than health warnings, but not everyone will feel the same way. So, be warned, as soon as we can find a mug who's prepared to count all the returns, it'll be Readers Poll time again!

Paul Cockburn

CONTENTS

Open Box 2
Ghostbusters, MSH, Stormbringer, CoC, Paranoia & Teenage Ninja Mutant Turtles reviewed

Where & Back Again 7
Graham Staplehurst journeys around the possibilities for Middle-earth adventure

Critical Mass 16
Dave Langford on the latest SF/Fantasy books

2020 Vision 18
Alex Stewart stands in for Colin Greenland

Thrud the Barbarian 21
Carl Critchlow presents the Lore of the Rings

All In The Mind 23
Psionics in AD&D, as thought through by Steven Palmer

Ghost Jackal Kill 29
Graeme Davis meets Sam Spade in a Call of Cthulhu scenario

Think About It! 36
Using the old noddle - Intelligence as viewed by *Phil Masters*

'Eavy Metal 40
Kev Adams brushes up on his technique

Letters 46
Love letters from you to us

Psi Judges 48
Getting inside the mind of Judge Anderson's cronies

Play It Again Frodo 52
Dave Langford breaks through to the back of the mag - trying to explain role-playing in simple words

Gobbledigook 54
Killkillkillkillkillkillkillkillkill

Fracas 56
All the latest news and the Gaming Top Twenty

Classified Ads 60
Reader's advertisements

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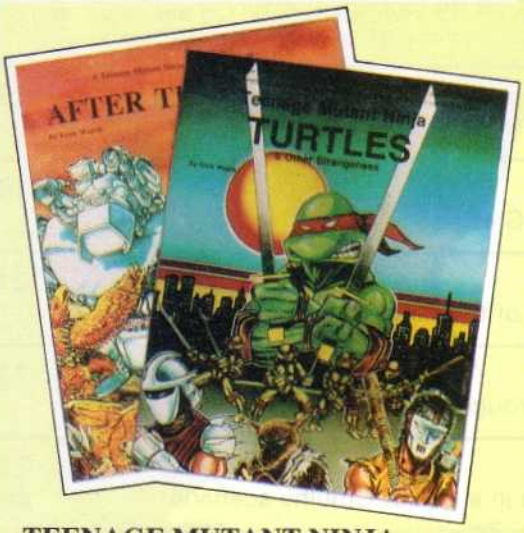
OPEN BOX



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES AND OTHER STRANGENESS
Role-Playing Game
PALLADIUM £6.95

AFTER THE BOMB
Role-Playing Supplement – TMNT
PALLADIUM £3.95

TMNT (a reasonably sensible abbreviation used extensively in the game) is a role-playing game based on the comic by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird. Fans of the comic will already know what to expect, other readers will need enlightenment. The heroes are exactly what the title implies: large intelligent turtles, trained in Oriental martial arts, and equipped with a variety of Ninja weaponry. Apart from this central joke, the comics pretend to take themselves very seriously. To reflect this, the style of play is completely deadpan, setting intelligent and deadly animals against a background of urban terrorism, gang warfare, juvenile delinquency and random violence.

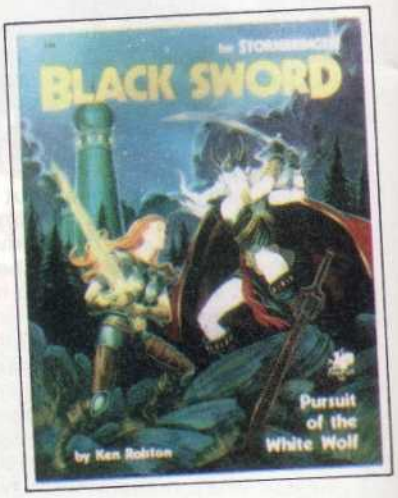
The game uses the same rules framework as *Heroes Unlimited*, Palladium's SuperHero rpg, but is complete in itself. Character generation uses a combination of dice rolls (to select species, attributes and hit points), then free choice of skills and powers. The rules reward creatures which are unlike men; the closer the character is to human size and appearance, the smaller the number of points available for powers and other changes from the species norm. The combat system is moderately complex (more complicated than AD&D, less so than Champions), based on a system of initiative rolls, rolls to hit, attempts to dodge or parry and damage determination. There are rules for psionics, modern and ancient weapons and equipment (with many examples), and a range of animal powers, areas of knowledge, and skills. Full super-power rules are omitted, but the authors say TMNT is fully compatible with Heroes Unlimited; adventures combining characters from the two systems shouldn't run into problems.

As well as rules, the profusely-illustrated 110-page book contains a new 8-page comic strip featuring the turtles, a 3-page origin strip (reprinted from *TMNT* #1), details of the turtles and other strip characters, and five short scenarios. *Caesar's Weasels* is a relatively simple cops and robbers story, in which the players have to stop a gang looting the city; *The Terror Bears* involves a group of psionic mutants, and is a little more difficult; *Doctor Feral* sets up a major human villain, who enslaves mutant animals and could reappear in later scenarios; *Terror on Rural Route 5* introduces a farm animals turned urban guerilla; finally, *The Leg of the Ninja* is a campaign outline, introducing a ruthless criminal organisation which can reappear in many future adventures.

After The Bomb is the first supplement, a campaign setting based on America after a nuclear war. The authors are careful to stress they don't feel the setting is realistic, or that nuclear war is desirable; it's simply used to set up a situation involving large numbers of mutated animals. In post-holocaust America there are hundreds of intelligent species, from giant ants (what happened to the square-cube law isn't really explained) and stag beetles to alligators, dogs, horses and bears. Most human survivors are followers of the evil and technologically advanced Empire of Humanity, a dictatorship dedicated to the extermination of all mutants. The animals aren't so well organised, and their technology is roughly equivalent to that of the 1950s. Naturally, this situation involves a fair amount of conflict, and all the adventurers are raids into the Empire's territory, or involve the Empire in other ways. My favourite was *Gun Bunnies and Zombies*, which seems to have been written primarily as an excuse to introduce the legendary guerilla leader Bug Bunny, and his colleagues Bomb Bunny, Bullet Bunny and Beach Bunny, who lead the dreaded Gun Bunnies survivalists. Other adventures revolve around the discovery of working pre-holocaust technology and the Empire's genocidal plans; *A Journey To Boars Town* takes the heroes to Boston and an encounter with a genuine mad scientist; *Clem's Big Adventure* involves a sinister plan to force the communal giant ants to produce warrior slaves; *Aerial Supremacy* is a trek to find a mysterious gadget (*Paranoia* fans will know the feeling well); *The Powers of Ali Komani* is an ancient technology epic; and *The Rodent Plague* introduces yet another sinister human plot. It's all good fun, if you can accept the basic premises involved, but seems a little limited; I find the present-day setting of the original game more satisfactory, since it offers more opportunities for plot development and diversity.

Marcus L. Rowland

SECRET WARS II
Campaign Scenario - Marvel Super Heroes
TSR £5.50



BLACK SWORD

RPG Supplement - Stormbringer

Chaosium £5.95

TERROR FROM THE STARS

RPG Scenario - Call of Cthulhu

Chaosium £5.95

Well, I suppose it was inevitable, so we might as well stop groaning and see what we've got here.

A 32-page character book containing the full (potential) cast of heroes and villains and a lot of new characters who haven't been featured before, including the New Mutants, Defenders and Power Pack. Also some interesting chaps like Mephisto, Eternity, Death™ and The Watcher.

A 32-page campaign book detailing the plot. As there is an awful lot to it, nothing is covered in very much detail.

And it's that map again! The fabled MSH map of New York gets yet another section. Does anyone have a table big enough for all of it? Also a couple of general purpose terrains on the back of it.

The Plot? For those of you who don't know, there's this guy called The Beyonder who used to be a universe but then he discovered our universe and realised that he wasn't the only thing in creation and so, therefore he wants to know what it is like to not be a universe so .... Need I go on? But then any average GM can probably write ten times better than Jim Shooter, so you may well be able to carry it off.

The essence of the plot is that the heroes are faced with an enemy who can wipe out the world with a flick of his pinky, has the education of a 2-year-old and wants to grow up. The heroes have to play mummy and daddy.

Actually folks, this is an awful lot better than *Secret Wars I*. To start with, although there are potentially even more heroes involved, you don't have to play them all at once. Only at the end do the numbers get ridiculous. And there is quite a bit of plot to it, much of it interesting psychological stuff. You can't out-fight The Beyonder, so you have to out-talk him. Your players should be utterly shell-shocked by the time they finish this.

There are some gripes, of course. It goes without saying that it will help if you've read the comics on which the game is based. But as the SWII plot ran for almost a year and crossed over into almost every Marvel title, the chances of your having done this are not high. TSR have cut corners to keep the package down to a reasonable size, but not having character pictures for some of the new bad guys is a bit poor.

Because of its structure and basis in a particular comic story you have to be running an MSH campaign to use this. It is a must for MSH addicts because of the new characters and the map, though even they might find it too heavy to use. Anyone else, forget it.

And what I want to know is, does God know that Marvel have trademarked Death?

Pete Tamlyn

Black Sword continues the adventure from the *Stormbringer* supplement *Stealer Of Souls*, and manages to follow its promising beginnings. Freyda Nikorn, the daughter of a murdered merchant-prince, has taken revenge on the men behind her father's death. Now she seeks Elric of Melniboné, who actually killed him. She is accompanied on her quest by the player-characters, who must be loyal or well-paid if they dare to undertake such a mission. The consequences of challenging Elric should be obvious ....

In this supplement, the emphasis is more on following Elric's recent trail, whereas the first adventure concentrated on the goal of revenge against four local merchants. The first port of call is Nadsokor, City of Beggars, a stinking mass of tiny hovels crouching around the ruins of an older city. The stay should prove to be short, but Freyda could gain powerful aid here. Additionally, Nadsokor is rumoured to hold various wonderful treasures, which may divert the company from their search awhile.

Moving on, the group follows Elric's path into the Forest of Troos and the Kingdom of Org. Due to the recent death of the king, Org is virtually collapsing as the characters watch; noble families struggle to gain power as the peasants are stuck by famine and pestilence. From here, the road leads across plains, and into the Badlands, and eventually to the climax of the adventure as Freyda engages Elric in combat.

One point of interest is that the adventure not only provides plenty of things for the players to do, but suggests other activities they may wish to undertake, or that the referee can exploit to lengthen the scenario. Some of these suggestions can be used later in other adventures; the end of the supplement is taken up by a list of other paths the group may want to pursue.

The supplement deals with most topics in commendable detail, but leaving further embellishment to the referee if desired. More excellent maps are provided by Carolyn Schultz, and the standard of presentation is high, as usual. There are a few annoying typos, but these do not detract greatly from the supplement.

Some referees may worry they cannot afford both adventure packs; this too is allowed for by the supplement. **Black Sword** lists a campaign overview for those who had to miss *Stealer*, and suggests a handy starting point for those not playing the first adventure. The sequence is even flexible enough to allow a group to first pursue Elric, and then seek vengeance on his former employers.

As a whole, the campaign shows great promise for future Stormbringer releases, particularly if the author, Ken Rolston, can be persuaded to write some more. He has a real talent for expanding on Moorcock's stories, with plausible and often exciting results. This may prove to be the most fascinating **Stormbringer** adventure you've played yet.

Phil Frances

Just when you thought it was safe .... **Terror From The Stars** crawls from the Cthulhu racks, the twelfth Chaosium release for CoC (if you count the Keeper's Screen), and an indication of the quality of the submissions the company is receiving from independents. It is gratifying that Chaosium recognises talent in the wider gaming world, and is willing to promote it. **Terror** contains only three pieces, but high standards throughout mean it is a very pleasing product indeed: *Call of Cthulhu* shows no obvious signs of peaking as yet.

The centre of the supplement is occupied by a 12-page play-aid, *The Field Manual of the Theron Marks Society*, a guide to Cthulhu-busting written by one of the Society's surviving members (although by the time it is printed, the 'editors' have announced his death!). Topics under discussion include Strategy, Personnel, Equipment, Investigative Procedures, Tactical Procedures and matching monsters to weapons likely to harm them. As all Keepers out there reel in horror at the thought of this information in the hands of their players (1D20 SAN loss), let me add that not all the information given is true, or particularly safe to follow. Apparently, even Theron Marks didn't know all the answers, and his correct conclusions are difficult to identify. The Field Guide lends itself to fragmented revelation, if only because it may give away too much for some tastes. It does refer in places to other Chaosium campaigns, which is unfortunate if your group happens to be playing in one of them; the only way around this I can see is to omit the references, or offset the Society's effortsinto the past, and presume they failed to thwart the evil.

Two scenarios complete the work, both with a Central/South American feel. *The Pits Of Bendal-Dolum* sends our investigators deep into the wilds of British Honduras in search of a missing university exploration team. The plot eventually leads elsewhere, and could provide an introduction to an upcoming Chaosium pack based on Lovecraft's *Dreamlands*.

It will require a degree of luck or a high SAN to reach the end of the adventure and remain sane, because the plot gradually chips away SAN (often in large chunks).

The Temple Of The Moon proves to be pretty taxing on mental stability too. Again, the group is immersed into a situation of missing personnel from an archaeological expedition, and some artifacts are also astray. Ties exist that can link the previous adventure to this one, which means a welcome dose of continuity in the campaign. Other published scenarios have used situations similar to those in the Temple adventure, and the Keeper may have to juggle the plot and emphasis a little to ensure his players don't feel they've seen some of this before.

Terror From The Stars stands up well against other releases of its type (*The Asylum*, or *Curse Of The Chthonians* for example), and the added advantage of a lower price means you can't really go wrong with this one.

Phil Frances

OPEN BOX

GHOSTBUSTERS

Role Playing Game

West End Games (With Chaosium Inc) £12.95

Since the film *Ghostbusters* appeared there have been several attempts to devise appropriate rules for various horror games, and several improvised games have been run at *Dragonmeets* and other events. Now an official **Ghostbusters** game is available.

The main emphasis of this game is humour, as might be expected from the producers of Paranoia. Players can take on the roles of characters from the film, but the game works best with new characters who hold franchises from Ghost Busters International (GBI), a scrooge-like corporation with all the charm of Atilla the Hun. The game includes franchise agreements, mandatory will forms, and other documents from GBI; the small print is well worth reading.

Character generation is ridiculously easy (by comparison, *Toon* is difficult). Each Ghostbuster has twelve points which can be spread over four traits; Brains (intelligence and education, Muscle (strength), Moves (mental disciplines, social skills and dexterity), and Cool (charisma and fast talking). The player also chooses four related talents, rated three points higher than the base trait; for example, Brains 7 with Physics 10. Talents range from useful to extremely silly; one NPC has 'Narrow Eyes Menacingly' as a Cool-related talent. Players must also choose a goal in life; for example, selfless devotion to humanity or senseless violence. Finally each character begins with twenty 'brownie points', which can be added to difficult dice rolls before the dice are thrown.

GBI provide various equipment items, from Proton Packs (*ZAAAPP* and Ghost Traps to vehicles, radios, reference books, and other essential material. Characters can carry and use up to three items of equipment each, represented by cards held by the players.

When traits or talents are used the player simply rolls a six-sided dice for each point, then adds any previously-declared brownie points. One of the dice must always be a "ghost" die, with the Ghostbusters symbol replacing the 6 and counted as zero if it appears. If the roll exceeds a difficulty number assigned to a task (for example, parking a big car safely is a 'Move' activity with diffuculty 5, paying no taxes is a 'Brains' activity with difficulty 20) the activity succeeds. If the 'ghost' appears Something Bad Happens. For example, someone who makes a Moves roll to cross a dangerous bridge without falling, and succeeded but rolled the 'ghost', might then find that something vital had been left behind.

Someone who failed and rolled the 'ghost' would suffer a catastrophic accident; for example, falling off the bridge, which then collapses and lands on the victim.

Ghosts and other supernatural creatures have two main attributes, Power and Ectopresence, plus associated talents. Power is used to determine the number of dice used in a ghost's attacks. Ectopresence is the ability to resist Proton Pack attacks. Ghosts also use the 'ghost' dice, but a 'ghost' roll indicates an especially favourable result.

Other rules and examples cover Weird Science (the ability to convert junk into odd gadgetry, which sometimes bears a striking resemblence to Toon's 'Illogical Logic'), ghost generation and use, three scenarios, twenty-one short scenario outlines, and a range of common plot situations. These range from conventional ghost busting (a haunted apartment house) to encounters with aliens, mad scientists, lawyers (aargh), and sinister deities.

The box contains two books (for players and referee) plus various handouts, equipment cards, and six dice. Since I've seen pre-production proofs, rather than a final version, I can't give page counts.

Artwork is good, including stills from the film and sketches. Most suffered from poor reproductioon in my copy, but production printing should be satisfactory.

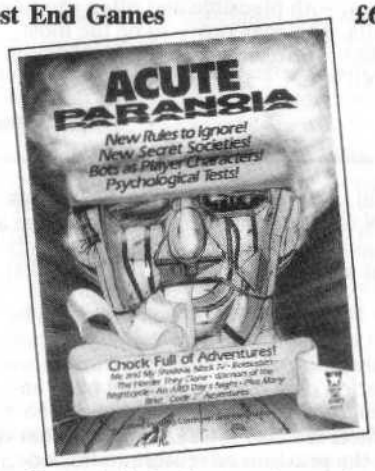
This game heralds the arrival of Chaosium in its new role as a design house, developing ideas which are then produced by other companies. Chaosium seem to have done their work well, turning a fairly restricted background into a form that allows interdimensional and time travel, sinister aliens, and a whole range of other paranormal and supernatural plots. Provided Ghostbusters remains popular, and the second film lives up to its predecessor, the game may join Toon and *Paranoia* as a light-hearted alternative to the 'serious' business of role playing. However, it remains to be seen if the cost of this game will be justified by the quality of future scenarios; with the exception of the film tie-in, the system offers few advantages over Paranoia and Toon, and will be a good deal more expensive.

Marcus L Rowland

ACUTE PARANOIA

RPG Supplement (Paranoia)

West End Games £6.95



Acute Paranoia is the first supplement for **Paranoia**, the game set in a computer-controlled civilisation that makes 1984 look restful. It extends the original rules by adding four articles, a long and extremely silly epic, three short scenarios, and nine mini-outlines. At eighty pages it's the fattest Paranoia publication to date, and the list of contributors seems to include everyone who's ever had anything to do with the game.

There are four main articles, three of them for the GM only. **Sanity Tests** discusses the ways in which the Computer makes sure its servants are fit for trouble-shooting, by subjecting them to searching psychological screening. Unfortunately this screening, and the therapy the computer prescribes, may leave the troubleshooters completely insane.

Better Living Through Chemistry introduces drugs into a troubleshooter's life; discussing their effects, side effects, and the nasty things that happen when you can't get them. Prolonged use of these rules could leave you with no surviving troubleshooters before adventures even begin.

New Secret Societies adds even more wacky groups, from the ruthlessly suppressed Earth Mothers (new cult skills; Sexual Relationships and Midwifery) to the Trekkies, a group totally ignored by the Computer. A revised Secret Society Table adds them to those available in the original game.

Playing Robots contains everything needed to run robots as player characters, mainly a complete character generation system (non-random, based on a range of components, with a disadvantage system used to gain extra points) plus hints on personality and behaviour. The role models suggested range from Marvin the paranoid android to Tik-Tok (the homicidal robot of John Sladek's novel). It's all splendidly silly, but integrated human-robot adventures could be a little hard to run. For some obscure reason the eighth page of the pullout section is a sheet of handouts for one of the adventures; GM's who want to let the players read this section must either photocopy it or cover the last page.

The main adventure, **Me and My Shadow, Mark IV** (21 pages plus handouts) is a relatively simple assignment, to spend a few hours guarding a new addition to the armed might of Alpha Complex. Things are never that easy however, and the troubleshooter's lonely vigil soon acquires a cast of hundreds. It's a fun adventure, though a bit limited when compared to previous Paranoia modules.

Botbusters is a short scenario, designed as an introduction to robot player characters. It's a fairly typical Paranoia 'hose job', in which the robots are sent on a mission with limited instructions and a lot of misinformation. It's unusually survivable, and is the first Paranoia adventure I've seen without a nasty sting in its tail.

Warriors of the Nightcycle (four pages) introduces Ninja to the Alpha Complex. It can either be run as a one-off adventure, or as the basis of a prolonged campaign. It isn't entirely convincing but does introduce some lovely lines, such as this Haiku verse;

Electricity
Crackling through the ozoned air
Time for a new cyclone

Finally, **The Harder They Clone** (four pages) is another 'hose job' scenario.

The nine 1—3 page mini-scenarios are each built around one or two simple ideas. By far the best is Miami Laser, in which the troubleshooters are recruited to make a new drama series. It re-introduces one of the main characters from a previous Paranoia adventure, **Send in the Clones**, and really deserves more detail than is provided.

While I liked most parts of this book, at least two of the mini-modules were disappointing, and **The Harder They Clone** seems to recycle ideas from earlier modules. Although this supplement isn't perfect, a total of eight or nine disappointing pages out of eighty isn't a bad score, and most Paranoia referees should find this a worthwhile investment.

Marcus L Rowland

Where and Back Again?

or, starting up a Middle-earth campaign

By Graham Staplehurst

If you've been fascinated by the works of JRR Tolkien and have wanted to try your hand at adventuring in his faerie world of Middle-earth, this article will be a guide to how best to go about it. In it, you will find a discussion of the choices and alternatives available to you, so you can enjoy the legacy of Tolkien to the fullest extent. There is an awful lot more to it than just recreating Bilbo or Frodo's epic journeys - for innumerable adventures lie untold and undisturbed, just waiting for some brave souls to pass by and pick them up.

John Blanche © 1986 - 'The Fellowship'

To start off with, there are two essential components of the game you must think about and make a decision on: the Rules and the Players. If you are to be a Games-Master for a fantasy rolegame based on Middle-earth, these two items are most important, as once you have taken them up, you are usually stuck with them. It is relatively easy to change the location or the type of adventure you run, but make sure you have rules and players you will be happy with.

sources

There are two areas of source material for a Middle-earth campaign available. These are Tolkien's works themselves, and the games-orientated material published under license by Iron Crown Enterprises (ICE). The latter centres on the roleplaying game MERP (Middle-earth Roleplaying), and encompasses a large, and growing, number of campaign and adventure supplements. If you are seriously thinking of using the ICE material, it is best if you can borrow it off someone, or at least play under another GM who runs a MERP campaign (this is always best with any new game you are thinking of buying, especially as few are cheap any more). Take note of the style of the rulebook and the supplements and see if you feel comfortable with them - and remember that a good campaign will last quite a long time, if you are lucky.

It is also important to consider what your players know about Tolkien's works in the Middle-earth cycle. If they know a lot about it, then so must you. *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are fairly essential reading, and *The Silmarillion* and *Unfinished Tales* are also very useful to get further inside the spirit of Middle-earth. You don't have to go overboard and study the Appendices and Notes in order to pass an 'O' Level in Tolkien, but familiarity with the geography, races and history of Middle-earth is more than useful. Also, as you read, you will soak up the atmosphere of Middle-earth, so that when you come to replicate it as a GM you will be subconsciously directed in the right way, allowing your players to 'suspend disbelief'.

campaign style

Seriously thinking about a campaign before running it sounds like an obvious course of action, but these days many people find themselves making up rationalised backgrounds and creating worlds as they go along. This can be more time-consuming than thorough initial preparation, and can also lead to mistakes and inadvertent contradictions which undermine the players' faith in you and your creations.

Campaign style affects the course of play immensely. Below are some possible styles of play which fit games set in Middle-earth; there are many others. By deciding the overall style of the campaign beforehand, you will have some idea of the forces likely to motivate both players and NPCs - and remember that NPCs are far more dominant than monsters in a Middle-earth game – giving you a 'peg' on which to hang individual adventures and a backdrop linking all of them.

a) The Quest
A quest is a campaign centred on the search for something or someone, or which is concerned with achieving some ultimate objective. Both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are quests of a sort, although Bilbo didn't realise what the object of Thorin's quest really was until they arrived at the Lonely Mountain; Frodo of course knew all along what had to be done with the Ring, making it a real quest. Luthien and Beren in *The Silmarillion* go on a quest to recover a Silmaril from Morgoth. Quests are popular with fiction writers as they allow simple plot development, but do not rule out interesting diversions. The same is true of game quests. However, quests (simple or complex) are not everyone's cup of tea, and this is where you must be aware of your players, as they will be running the characters who have to make the campaign work. If you decide on a quest, make sure you have a clear idea of the ways in which it could be completed (have more than one way!), and of the people or things likely to help or hinder the characters in their undertaking. Also plan the duration carefully; will the players/characters need to be very experienced to avoid being trounced by the ultimate opponents? These are the sort of questions it is worth asking yourself before the first session.

b) The Crusade
A crusade against evil in Middle-earth may be an attractive proposition if you like continual action and combat. Think about the level at which the campaign is to be pitched; for example, in *The Silmarillion* Turin and his band of fighters wage a personal war against the mighty Morgoth with only their swords. Alternatively, you could have the players as commanders of small units or even armies from Gondor, Arnor or Nûmenor, seeking out and destroying contingents of orcs, Haradhrim, Wainriders and so on. This allows for plenty of ordinary adventuring as well. The basic idea is to go out there, find the bad guys and sock it to 'em. Hard.

c) General Adventuring
Many games have a campaign background simply as a setting for individual adventures. While this can be seen as a waste of Tolkien's wonderful source material, it is also a lot easier to administrate, as you only have to know the basics of the social and geographical environment in which the characters are located. For this reason, it is best to pick a setting which is relatively stable and yet offers potential for the mercenary adventurer seeking fame and fortune. Middle-earth has plenty of these to offer. Bilbo's adventure in *The Hobbit*, already mentioned as a quest (at least from the dwarves' point of view), can also be seen as simple treasure-seeking.

d) The Society
To get characters really involved in the game and their game environment, this sort of adventure might be your best option. A campaign in which the characters concentrate on their society in some way (eg, politically, financially or even militarily) can be tough to run, needing a feel for the fine detail of things and an imaginative mind to fill the holes that your source material leaves. But it can be very rewarding as well. There is a vast array of possibilities in the span of space and time that Tolkien's cycle covers, and players can give their characters a wide variety of aims and objectives. While one hopes to achieve wealth and status as a merchant, another might seek to become a landed knight and a third to subvert the rulers and overthrow the system. Play can be set in a dominant society coping with the problems of the economy and smaller rivals, or in an oppressed society trying to rise up and gain freedom. The game can encompass warfare, national defence, corruption and crime, money and greed, marriage, raising families and class systems. Elements of all these things can be found in Tolkien's works – the decay of Nûmenor, Arnor and Gondor; the problems of holding states together; the expansion of new states such as Rohan and the Shire; and all these are populated by potential characters.

Naturally, no campaign will be purely one or other of these elements (or any other you can think of), but it is useful to have one overall 'philosophy' on which to set the tone and style of your campaign. In much the same way that a novelist might set down the characters and plots of a book they are about to write, so should you devote attention to the bones of the campaign you are about to set in motion. This is only the first stage to think about, and you may not be able to make a final decision until you have considered the second; what rules you will use.

rules

Just how important are the specific rules you use in a game? Surprisingly, they can be very important, and in this respect there are two major considerations. The first is (again) what the players know of them. You might find it best to run a rules system the players know, so they are comfortable with it and can play within its structure almost without thinking. In effect, a well-known system can obtrude less into the roleplaying aspect of the game. However, a system which your players know is also open to abuse, either conscious or unconscious, since players cannot help but take advantage of knowledge their characters would not have - for example, the fact that in AD&D a wight can only be hit with silver or magic weapons. It can therefore be beneficial to have a system the players do not know and have no access to. This also has another use – they cannot argue with you as GM! If they think you are changing the rules simply because different things happen in similar situations, they should use the opportunity to look for the hidden element of the system they had not thought of, rather than grouse to you. And they should be forced to concentrate on roleplaying aspects of the game, since there are no rules for them to 'play'.

The second concern is the impact the system has on the style of the game. To take ourselves out of the Middle-earth context for a moment, *Call of Cthulhu* is a system designed really for a 'Crusade' type campaign, with the characters unearthing and disposing of evil beings trying to take over the earth. In a similar way, certain systems may or may not be suitable for the sort of campaign you desire, because of the emphasis they put on magic, combat, increasing skills or any other section of the game. It is important you recognise the

style of a game before you start a campaign using its rules, since it might have a severely deleterious effect on your enjoyment and that of your players if you are frustrated by rules you are stuck with – there is nothing more annoying than having to rework rules in the middle of a campaign to keep the game together.

The most obvious choice of rules for a Middle-earth game is the MERP system produced by ICE. But before you plunge straight in, be warned! Do not expect a perfect system, nor one which perfectly replicates Tolkien's world. MERP is a watered-down version of another game, *RoleMaster* (also produced by ICE) with a solely Tolkien background as a garnish. It is not terribly expensive (although buying all the supplements can be – but then isn't is always?), but you should examine them carefully to make sure they do what you want them to do. If you find them generally acceptable, don't worry about changing individual rules (I have a particular dislike for the magic system, so I discarded it). MERP is very useful if you intend to use the many Middle-earth supplements available now, since some have stats for MERP (though all are based on RoleMaster rather than MERP).

D&D/AD&D is the other main contender. Either will need a lot of pruning to bring them down to size (throw away the *Monster Manuals* for a start) and may need actual rules changes. Both are designed for "humanocentric" games – ie, ones where humans are dominant. In Middle-earth, elves are very superior to men in almost every respect except numbers, and other races have a contribution to make. There is also less emphasis on money. However, the system is based upon simple structures which are well-known and widely-practised and it is also fairly easy to translate the MERP/RM stats and terminology in the ICE Middle-earth supplements into the AD&D/D&D rules.

However, there is one other option: your own system. With so much background material to draw from, it should not prove difficult to pull together your own thoughts and experience to make a homegrown system. This will have the advantage of not being known to your players and can also incorporate elements you particularly like of other systems, leaving you free to add ideas of your own without running the risk of annoying players by adulterating rules they are familiar with. The most obvious place to take ideas from is MERP/Role-Master since this is the system featured in the Middle-earth supplements - if you intend using them.

the setting

So, having decided on the theme and a rules system which meshes with your own preferences and the needs of the campaign, you are ready to start looking for the particular niche in which to set your Middle-earth campaign. Take a deep breath. The world is not only bigger than you imagine, but bigger than you can imagine, in the words of Arthur C Clarke. If you take a man's lifework, as Middle-earth was for JRR Tolkien, and then add to it over the best part of another man's lifetime, as his son Christopher has done, and then allow a bunch of game designers a practically free hand to extrapolate and dream to their heart's content over hundreds and thousands of man-hours, what do you come up with? Only the most detailed and beautiful background for a game you could possibly want. Many GMs might contend that they prefer to develop their own setting and pour their creative energies in these directions, but Tolkien's Middle-earth is big enough for many levels of creation, or 'subcreation' as Tolkien had it. Your creative energies can be used to produce an extra layer of personality and detail over the existing framework. By the same token, a GM is free to develop areas only hinted at by Tolkien in the same way that the ICE designers have in certain supplements.

a) Tolkien's Middle-earth

The Middle-earth of Tolkien's works, as differentiated from that of the MERP game and supplements, is quite big in its own right. It spans thousands of years and hundreds of miles. There are three great continents: Aman, home of the Blessed; Endor, the continent also known as Middle-earth; and between them for a time there was Nûmenor. The possibilities of adventures and campaigns set in the world Tolkien invented are innumerable. A few have been adapted and discussed in the MERP supplements (see the next section), but there are so many others it would not be possible to cover them all. The ICE *Campaign & Adventure Guidebook* has a good, if brief, overview of the lands and times of Middle-earth, and Appendix B in *The Lord of the Rings*, The Tale of Years, is a very useful guide to when and where the major events of the Second and Third Ages took place. There follows a short summation of some of the more immediately presentable campaign ideas, as lifted straight from Tolkien's works.

The Years Before The Sun [see: *The Silmarillion*] is the time when elves and men awakened in the wild places of Middle-earth and were sought out by the Valar under the light of the stars of Elbereth. For a time two great Lamps illuminated the world. Great and strange beasts walked the world and the elves wandered, teaching all things to speak and learning their languages. A campaign centred here would be mainly concerned with one or other racial grouping, as they rarely mixed. The world is new and its geography probably quite different. It was lit by the Two Trees until Melkor's poisoning of their light with ungoliant, and there are many of his evil creations abroad. The First Age starts with the rising of the Sun and the Moon; by then the elves have split into the three Kindreds, some dwelling in Aman (the Vanyar), some knowing the Valar and yet not dwelling in their lands, and others who remained unknowning in Middle-earth. And when Melkor steals the Silmarils of Feanor, many Vanyar return with him to Middle-earth to take their revenge, setting up many kingdoms in Beleriand.

The First Age lasts from the rising of the Sun to the War of Wrath when Morgoth is finally overcome. It is a time of great trial for the Noldor, the elves who fled from Aman with Feanor and his seven sons. In Beleriand there is a terrible war with Morgoth; the elves build many settlements and citadels such as Belegost, Menegroth and Gondolin; some hidden, some strongly defended. They trade with the dwarves and encounter the first civilised men. The Three Houses of Men are founded, from whom are descended all the Free Men of Middle-earth in later years. There is trouble in the lands that are to become Eriador and Rhovanion in the Third Age, where Silvan Elves and ruder men mingle and settle, and some are suborned by servants of Morgoth and even Sauron. Many petty kingdoms rise and fall (the Barrow-downs in Eriador are evidence of their handiwork). Events are described in the Quenta Silmarillion and Narn I Hin Hurin (in *Unfinished Tales*); possibilities for campaigns include being freedom fighter like Turin; undertaking small offensive actions against outposts of Morgoth's realm; going on a quest for helpful powerful items or even for a Silmaril (!); recovering lost magic from a sacked city occupied by dragons and orcs; indulging in politics in the mannish communities to try and enlist their aid in the struggle against Morgoth; etc.

The Second Age [see Akallabeth and Appendix B to *TLOTR*; also *Unfinished Tales*] is the time jointly of elves and men. The men who aided the elves have been rewarded with the bounteous isle of Nûmenor to settle away from the strife of Middle-earth. The latter is soon experiencing evil again as Sauron brings power into his grasp as the inheritor of Morgoth. In Middle-earth, the western coasts are slowly settled by seafaring Númenoreans, whilst the dwarves delve deep in Moria and the elves settle Lindon, Eregion and Lorien. Sauron forges the Nine Rings and creates the Ringwraiths by increasing his sway to the east, but he is held in check by the growing Numenoreans presence in Gondor, Umbar, etc. He builds his defences in Mordor and wars on the elves after the creation of the One Ring; however, he is thwarted by Númenoreans. Later, he is utterly defeated and captured by Ar-Pharazôn, King of Númenor, only to corrupt the King and Court and entice them into rebellion against the Valar, which results in the Downfall of Númenor. Sauron's spirit returns to Middle-earth and the Last Alliance of Elves and Men (the Faithful) is led against him; the Age ends with the removal of the One Ring from his hand.

The Second Age is suited to any number of campaigns: Númenorean society changes from a free and easy life to a desperate fear of death and persecution among the Faithful who seek to retain the old elvish ways; in Middle-earth there are elves, dwarves and the wild men; the settlements and conquests of the Númenoreans; the fight against evil after the Downfall in Mordor and other lands of the south and east; the lands of the Mannish rulers who are destined to fall under Sauron's sway and become Ringwraiths, the evil Nazgûl of fear and terror.

The Third Age is the best documented, and its story is of the rise of Man. Many elves depart westward once again after the dissolution of the Last Alliance leaving only the havens of Thranduil, Elrond, Galadriel and Cirdan known to men; Dwarves enter a long and bloody war with the orcs to their

ultimate detriment, and when Sauron rises from the ashes of Barad-Dûr he looks to the men in Middle-earth as his allies and enemies. He causes Angmar to be founded in the north which brings about the downfall of the Dunedain kingdom of Arnor; in the south he works on the destruction of Gondor and seeks the Ring. Gondor expands then declines, suffering civil war and invasion by the Easterlings. Umbar cecedes and becomes a dire enemy while Arnor splits and succumbs piece by piece, even after the rout of Angmar. The hobbits migrate westward from the Auduin and found the Shire while the men of the Auduin form petty kingdoms and struggle to maintain their tribal societies. The middle of the Age sees the devastation of the Great Plague while the end is dominated by Sauron and his fall at the hands of the Little People, culminating in the Return of the King and the reuniting of Arnor and Gondor. Being the best known time of Tolkien's Middle-earth, it is also the easiest setting for almost any sort of campaign and all of ICE's booklets are derived from it.

The Fourth Age belongs almost solely to men. Nearly all the elves have departed westward or retired into the hidden areas where nature still governs; the dwarves are secreted in their caves and the Little People are soon forgotten and use their skills to stay that way. Evil is less dominant under the rule of Elessar - although no-one knows what the future holds. This time is ideal for campaigns in which the GM wishes to use some style or theme not actually existing in Tolkien's works, since there are no defined historical events set for the players to anticipate. By the third century all of the personalities of *The Lord of the Rings* have disappeared and the stage is set for a new drama.

b) ICE's Middle-earth

The ICE conception of Middle-earth is somewhat larger than Professor Tolkien's. It spans a vast continent, Endor, with many more possibilities open therein than detailed in the works Tolkien wrote. It uses a framework into which it pours a luxuriant growth of detail, supplying flesh, skin and organs vital to making the bare bones function in the same way that Tolkien brought individual regions of northwest Middle-earth to life with a few words. Though this procedure might sound like the blasphemy of Frankenstein, ICE have used solid theoretical geography and sociology linked with deep historical research to add their own flights of fancy. The result has to be read to be appreciated.

ICE have used the real world as a basis for their supplements, carefully adding and building around it. It will take them many years to cover Endor with every level of supplement they plan (for such is their conception), leaving many areas for budding designers to get to grips with. Their Middle-earth offers you the choice of fully-fledged world or an area rife with the potential for your own invention.

ICE have already delved into the idea of detailing parts of Endor not mentioned by Tolkien, with the *Andor* supplement. This is a very good example of how to expand Tolkien's themes without being restricted by the history he laid down, and it is well worth reading if you plan to do this yourself. DO be imaginative in developing cultures, artefacts, sub-races, civilisations and alternative histories; DON'T invent creatures unlike anything that Tolkien mentioned, or develop entirely new races, gods or religions which would be at odds with Tolkien's concept of the creation of Arda by illucatar and all the people in it by him and his Valar. The *Campaign & Adventure Guidebook* is very helpful in discussing climates, cultures and languages for places outside of northwest Endor should you desire to set up your campaign in the Wild Lands.

Tolkien out of Middle-earth

There is no reason for you to have to use the creations of Tolkien solely within the confines of Middle-earth. Many other games have 'used' his tales in completely different settings. The obvious location is on the real earth, merging the world with Arda and placing Endor in the Europe of pre-Roman or Dark Ages time. Another alternative is to place the land of elves, dwarves and Hobbits in America! The interaction between medieval European cultures and the peoples of Middle-earth would be quite fascinating and you could develop a whole new parallel history in which Sauron came from the Balkans or Arabia, the dwarves ridde the Alps with tunnels and the Hobbits rule the garden of England.

Alternatively, you could have Europe as the derivation of Middle-earth much later in the Fourth Age, after the changing Sea leaves the continent as we know it. After the Iron Age, the Romans come and go, leaving the Medieval kingdoms to discover their inheritance bit by bit. The campaign might even be disguised so players do not realise the Tolkien element until they come across a surviving enclave of elves or dwarves. Then they could search for lost magic items and ruined cities, for other lost peoples, and perhaps defend their realms against some awakened threat of ancient evil.

Examples of Campaigns

A Quest: The Crown of Numenor

In the Second Age, Ar-Pharazon the Golden took the Crown of Númenor with him to his doom when he led the fleet of Númenor to Aman against the Ban of the Valar in search of eternal life. Those who were foolhardy enough to set foot in the Blessed Realm suffered the punishment of the Valar who buried them under falling hills where they lie imprisoned in the Caves of the Forgotten until the Day of Doom. Now, in the Third Age, Sauron or one of his stronger minions has tricked the ruler of your country and seized control of his/her mind leaving the land controlled by the forces of evil. The one thing that could restore your monarch to his/her identity is the Crown of Númenor.

Although the lands of Aman and Eressea were removed from the circles of Middle-earth by Eru's decree after the Númenoreans' transgression, the Caves remain for the characters to seek out across the sea along with other unknown lands. They will have many exciting adventures, possibly losing their way and having to pit their strength against sea monsters and the inhabitants of wild and uncivilised tracts. On the way there is the landmark of Meneltarma, the peak of the holy mountain of Númenor which survived the Downfall, and possibly other guiding beacons the tales of Middle-earth do not openly speak of, yet which are known to the mariners of elvish ports.

On the barren western continent the Caves of the Forgotten must be sought out. Perhaps a dramatic denounment awaits them there with the shades of Ar-Pharazon and his army assembled to thwart them. And then the characters must return with the Crown and get it to their ruler with all the agents of Sauron working against them. Can they save the realm? This campaign could be linked to either Gondor or Arnor, or even Aragorn's united kingdom in the Fourth Age.

A Crusade: Fear and Loathing in Gorgoroth

The plateau of Gorgoroth in Mordor is one of the harshest places in Middle-earth after Sauron's Second Age occupation – a natural haunt of orcs and trolls and multitudes of other foul beasts both during and between the Dark Lord's many periods of residence in Barad-Dûr. The foundation of the foul realm of Mordor in SA 1000 is followed by Sauron's defeat in SA 1700, and this is accompanied by an attempt to cleanse Mordor. Characters could act out of a sense of duty, or perhaps want to collect bounty: 1sp for an orc's head and 2gp for a troll's head, for example. Action in Gorgoroth is also suited to the periods SA 3262 to 3320 and after the Last Alliance's victory in SA 3434.

There are repeat performances in the Third Age. Mordor is 'guarded' by Gondor until TA 1640 or so, and individuals could still adventure there until TA 1980 when the Nazgûl return and it becomes too dangerous. However, the end of the Third Age and the beginning of the Fourth sees a similar need for hardy souls arise and Aragorn's bounty would be no less great than that of his predecessors.

The crusade requires several things. First, motivated characters, which will make character backgrounds very important indeed. Many players artificially motivate their characters and then run into problems rationalising behaviour or visualising reactions to different situations - mainly because the character does not 'belong' in that situation. The characters will also need a safe base to retire to: Minas Ithil in the early days, perhaps a hidden cave such as Faramir had in *The Lord of the Rings* later when Sauron assumes his full potency and strength. Finally, to overcome problems of supply in a barren wilderness, the skills of trackers, fighters and healers are all very necessary.

A General Adventure

Almost any ICE module is suitable for running a campaign with no central theme

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other than diversity and player enjoyment. Some of the adventure modules would be particularly suited to short campaigns (or campaign segments), such as *Thieves of Tharbad* or *Dagorlad and the Dead Marshes*. If you want to devise such adventures yourself, the campaign supplements are more useful, or you could simply fall back on your own creative instincts and choose a setting outside of northwest Endor.

a society: Dol Amroth

Although the 'society' is the pivotal base in the majority of the ICE supplements, there are other areas suitable for a campaign in which you want to involve the players in a political or similar environment. In Dol Amroth on the rich Gondorean south coast you have an outwardly sound and satisfied society. The local ruler (under the King/Steward of Gondor) is the Prince of Dol Amroth, descended from joint human and elven stock. He rules from the white-towered sea fortress of Dol Amroth, peopled by upright and sturdy citizens and manned by sailors of mettle. The proud ships fare upon the seas and the bright swords of the merchant soldiery are often in action against the slave ships of Harad and the Corsairs of Umbar just across the Windy Bay of Bel. The fertile coastlands thereabouts are populated by farmers and craftsmen in closely-linked villages who supply the city, merchants thriving on the trade between the two areas and the rest of Gondor.

This mixture of brightness, fearlessness and humanity has its tainted side as well, with greedier merchants, spies in league with the southern enemies, thieves and rogues, merchants who supply black market drugs and outlawed substances, crooked justiciars and mendacious officials, bullying sergeants and thuggish guards. Under a weak or indolent Prince, the pride of Gondor's provinces might easily become a haven for the wicked – these might include the player characters, or they might be the ones trying to preserve a sanctuary for goodness and truth.

If the players want to lead their characters in search of the odd vicarious adventure, the ruins of the elvish port of Edhellond are just a few leagues away, and Umbar, Harad and even Mordor are not far by boat, the usual mode of transport in these parts.

the ICE campaigns

Most of the ICE modules have a specific campaign setting – the favourite being an interpretation of the area in the mid-seventeenth century Third Age – around TA 1640–1650. This is the time for *Northern & Southern Mirkwood*, for example, where the linked supplements detail the Shadow on the Forest cast by the Necromancer, the life of the Northmen (many different tribes being covered including Beornings, Eothraim, Gramuz, urban settlers such as those at Esgaroth and Dale, Easterling raiders, Gondorean subject nations and Woodmen), the Elves of Thranduil, the Dwarves of the Lonely Mountain, as well as creatures and evil things such as orcs and trolls and spiders. This setting is one of general, rather than specific adversity, unlike that in *Rangers Of The North* in TA 1640 where the struggle is to survive as sister-nations fall beneath the icy hand of the Witch King of Angmar. This is a campaign with a very important ultimate aim – the defence of the realm and the overthrow of the Witch King, or at the very least the frustration of his evil designs.

For those foolish enough to want to actually penetrate Angmar's dire realm and crusade against his forces, there is the *Angmar* supplement with the capital city of Carn Dûm, strongholds and villages, military structure and slave-settlers' society all covered. Here is the chance for spies and scouts, for the sudden and ferocious strike of the seasoned warrior or mage, for the patient, errosive, attritional war of rangers hardened to the elements. If the characters are inclined in this way, but do not fancy the cold climate, there is always *Umbar, Haven Of The Corsairs*, a reckless and evil dive if ever there was one, where fellow citizens cut each others' throats for a few coins or the favour of a more powerful 'friend'. Backstabbing and treachery are normal practise here and only the iron discipline of the leaders prevents civil war and allows the raids on Gondor's shipping to be organised above the chaotic level. With the exiled Gondorean population adventurers have no problems concealing their origins and can get on with reaping rich rewards, planning acts of sabotage or gathering information for Gondorean warlords.

The two rather different time-setting supplements are *Moria* and *Isengard & Northern Gondor*. Moria's setting is timeless, useful from the Second Age onwards, and the supplement dwells on the physical aspects of the delvings and on the dwarfs and their practises – but is very much a 'general adventuring' setting. Isengard on the other hand is set in TA 1440–1450 in the Kinstrife, the civil war of Gondor, and concentrates on the clashes in society – as well as detailing the Tower of Orthanc as an adventure setting.

conclusions

To conclude, I would just like to commend to you the works of JRR Tolkien and his son, and hope that in them you find enough material for all the campaigns you could anticipate ever wanting to run. Don't get worried about playing around with Tolkien's history or timeliness if you wish; expand on what he has given us in his tales; use your imagnination and concentrate on the atmosphere of them, for this is their greatest asset. We owe the very concept of roleplaying games to Tolkien and therefore it seems only natural that we should eventually return to him for inspiration in designing authentic and believable campaigns. I took my title from the subtitle of *The Hobbit*: 'There & Back Again', and I leave you with another quote from that, Tolkien's earliest published volume.

> "Many shook their heads and touched their foreheads and few believed any of his tales, yet he remained very happy to the end of his days, and those were extraordinarily long."

I wish you many long and happy days adventuring, no matter how few believe your tales or how many shake their heads at you! □

CRITICAL MASS

A regular book review column, written by Dave Langford

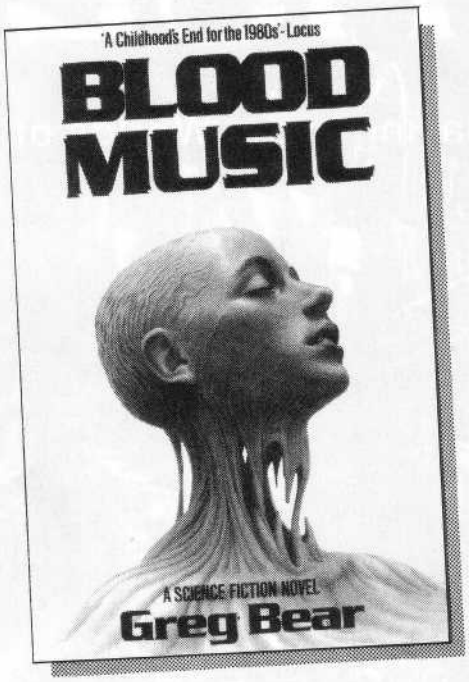
Reviewquest

Reviewquest is the fantasy game in which *you* take the part of a hapless book reviewer! Yes, you alone can stand against the evil Pulp Empire, using only your quivering, naked forebrain to parry inhuman weapons; cruel syntax of no human shape, smeared with the poison of ancient, festering clichés! Which is one way of saying I sometimes get tired of bloody fantasy trilogies, and slink off to wear my other hat as half of Ansible Information, purveyors of high-class software (advt) ....

That said, **The Anvil of Ice** by Michael Scott Rohan (Macdonald 348pp, £9.95), opening a trilogy called "The Winter of the World", is a good read. The hero Alv (later Elof) survives the bloody sacking of his town by quasi-vikings, to become an apprentice smith of a special kind – a maker of enchanted weapons. Much fascinating research is evident here, and Rohan can look forward to seeing his smithy passages stolen for many a role-playing campaign .... There's also a grittily solid background of impending Ice Age. The characters are nicely done and final confrontation between Elof and the representative of the Ice-powers has a nifty magical twist (we'll pass over the traditional fantasy reversal whereby, its leader disposed of, a hitherto irresistible army fades away in just one paragraph). Rohan clears the major hurdle of a trilogy opening: he actually makes me want to read book two! Stay tuned.

Blood Music by Greg Bear (Gollancz 262pp, £9.95) is currently shortlisted for the Hugo Award – an obvious winner if there's justice in the world, which often there isn't. The scenario is the near future: genetic tampering .... "Enzyme Valley" .... intelligent cells .... intelligent *disease*. A brilliant but wimpish researcher injects himself with thinking lymph cells to save his unauthorised experiment from the autoclave. Weird apocalypse follows as the cell clusters explore their world; being inhabited by germs is bad enough, but imagine being the environment of an Industrial Revolution. Bear doesn't, however, stop with the low-key horror of what North America becomes, but extrapolates further, and then further still. The finale is magnificent. Its only problem is that it's nigglingly close to the conclusion reached by an author extrapolating from a different start-point: Arthur C.Clarke in *Childhood's End*. But Bear, I think, does it better – and goes beyond even Clarke. Strongly recommended.

Brian Stableford, as consultant archaeologist at Greenhill Books, has been unearthing bygone SF/fantasy for republication. The list includes one unreadable classic (**The Blind Spot** by Austin Hall and Homer Eon Flint), plus several worthwhile period pieces like **Three Go Back** by J Leslie Mitchell (254pp, £8.95, originally published in 1932). An airship is wafted back 25,000 years and a bright lady novelist, an arms dealer and a pacifist are confronted with the facts of Cro-Magnon life; ie, no war, crime, jealousy, religion or clothes. The book is slightly flawed by the unfashionable depiction of Neanderthals as murderous baddies (Mitchell's point was that Cro-Magnons were nice because they were uncorrupted by civilization – so who corrupted their cousins?). But it's a pleasant novel, and reminds you that while American magazine heroes were zapping greenskins with their blasters, some 1930s authors still considered SF a literature of ideas.



Two high-quality productions from small presses .... **And the Lurid Glare of the Comet** (Serconia 123pp, $13.50 – try your local import shop) collects nine offbeat Brian Aldiss essays, including a fascinating 57pp mini-autobiography. The 1985 companion volume, *The Pale Shadow of Science*, is shortlisted for the nonfiction Hugo award. In Britain we have the newly founded Kerosina Press, with **Kaeti and Company** by Keith Roberts (Plovers Barrow, School Rd, Nomansland, Salisbury, SP5 2BY 224pp, £12.50): ten stories, eight previously unpublished, plus linking material. The £25 presentation edition comes with an extra story booklet and signed bookplate. Roberts writes as beautifully as ever; Kaeti, the tough young eternal heroine of these whimsical fantasies, has charm (as the author reminds us rather too often). As a whole one might call it self-indulgent .... but in a 1000-copy limited edition, why not? Self-indulgence from such as Aldiss or Roberts towers above the best efforts of many others.

This month's best unknown-to-Langford author must be J P Miller, whose **The Skook** (Arrow 307pp, £3.50) reminded me a lot of John D Macdonald's tough, compassionate, satisfying books. The unfortunate Span Barrmann is trapped in a cave by biker cultists, to be aided through a long underground nightmare by something which may or may not be real, a crazy beast from fairytales told to his daughters: the Skook. His escape story is an epic quest in little, beset by extinct creatures of the underworld deep. Meanwhile, the minor characters glow with life, from Span's semi-nympho wife, to bikers who outdo Charles Manson in nasty inventiveness. Recommended.

Back in traditional fantasy, **Dragonsbane** by Barbara Hambly (Unicorn 292pp, £2.95) strikes me as an improvement on her Darwath trilogy. Normally I pass into profound slumber when invited on another quest to slay another dragon. Hambly rewrites the standard myths, though; her hero slays dragons only with extreme reluctance and by fighting dirty, the traditional witch is not only the hero's lover but a strong heroine in her own right, and the dragon is a damned sight more sympathetic than some of its victims.

In previous reviews I've hinted that Katherine Deryni Kurtz is not at her best when evoking magic (except in an ecclesiastic context). In **The King's Justice** (Arrow 337pp, £2.95) she concentrates more on the political complexities of a mediaeval Wales that never was, and tells a good story. It's not only a King but an author who's matured, with the acceptance that it may be needful to execute an innocent man (a rebel rallying-point) or kill an enemy without giving him a chivalrous chance (which might mean the whole war having to be fought again). Paladins please note.

Michael Moorcock gives value for money in **The Opium General** (Grafton 304pp, £2.95). Two-thirds of the collection is another and final Jerry Cornelius black comedy, *The Alchemist's Question,* with all the old character swapping hip nonsequiteurs as entropy bubbles over and nuclear winter seems the logical option. You either like it or not. Other stories include a serious 1979-80 trio about looming world war. Most fun: *Starship Stormtroopers*, a radical essay which finds Heinlein as disturbing as *Mein Kampf*, but loses credibility by going on to lump atheist Isaac Asimov with Tolkien and C S Lewis (and Frank Herbert!) as despised "Christian apologists" ....

Here's Big Isaac himself, with **X Stands For Unknown** (Grafton 270pp, £2.95), yet another 17 science essays from *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, 1982-3. If you're scientifically literate you'll find the interesting bits buried in over-familiar stuff (though I always cheer Asimov when he stomps the crackpots). If not, you probably don't read books like this. That's showbiz. But for some really fascinating writing about and around science, grab Richard P Feynman's hilarious **Surely You're Joking, Mr Feynman!** (Unwin/Counterpoint 350pp, £3.95).

In brief: **A Heritage of Stars** (Methuen 219pp, £2.50) is minor, recent Clifford Simak SF, which is at least better than minor, recent Simak fantasy. Patrick Tilley's **Xan** (Grafton 332pp, £2.50) is a horror nasty with psychic vampire aliens, which I couldn't face reading. No room to list the other Hugo nominations.

[Har har, didn't you get one this year then? Ed]

Oh yes, but I was too modest to say so ....

20-20 VISION

A Bi-monthly column covering fantasy and science fiction movies, by Alex Stewart

More Of The Same, Only Different

In case you're wondering about the change in the byline, Colin's gone off to write another novel, so I'm standing in for him for a couple of issues. This means you're going to have to get used to a whole new set of pet hates and implicit assumptions; so *pay attention*. It'll cost you two-fifty a time to find out what these are like for yourselves, and you may not like the same kind of movies as me.

You might go for over-inflated rock videos, for instance, in which case **Absolute Beginners** is for you. It's glossy, slick and superficial, with a couple of nods towards Social Significance which stand out almost as awkwardly as the stumps of the subplots that ended up on the cutting-room floor. On the other hand the singing and dancing are quite nice, the climax looks uncannily like *Quatermass and the Pit* set to music, and the grossly over-hyped Patsy Kensit duly meets a most satisfying nemesis by turning in a performance that would have disgraced an episode of *Thunderbirds*. By the time you read this, some four months down the line, you're probably heartily sick of the whole thing; but it's worth mentioning, if only as a gentle reminder that there's a lot more to fantasy cinema than ghoulies, swords and starships.

All of which play a prominent part in **Starchaser: The Legend of Orin** (PG). This claims to be the first full-length animated feature to be made in 3-D, and as a technical exercise it's pretty impressive. Apart from a few cock-ups in the perspective, which leave characters apparently hanging in mid-air in a couple of scenes, the illusion is well-sustained. Unfortunately none of the ingenuity that went into creating the pictures is reflected in the script; every major scene, image and plot device has been ripped off from somewhere else, and you'll probably have as much fun as I did matching them up to the original sources.

Even so it rattles along at a cracking pace, and there are plenty of in-jokes planted for the adults in the audience – look out for the wonderfully camp Vincent Price clone, for instance. You're never in a moment's doubt that Orin's going to defeat the evil Zygon and free his oppressed people, so some of his encounters with whimsical robots and aliens tend to have an air of desperate padding about them; but the only things I found really irritating were his tendency to launch into interminable messianic monologues, and the blatant sexist stereotyping of the female characters.

So if you're stuck with a houseful of brats on a rainy weekend, clamouring for some sanitised mayhem, then *Starchaser's* for you. It'll keep them quiet, and you'll probably find it amusing yourself.

There's even more swordplay and mayhem in **Highlander** (15), a stylish, raucous and utterly preposterous D&D scenario transplanted bodily into contemporary New York. Christopher Lambert plays Connor McLeod, a medieval Scottish warrior with a French accent, befriended by Sean Connery's Glaswegian conquistador. According to Connery, they're both immortal; destined, like an indeterminate number of others, to brawl their way down the centuries until they all meet in New York to slaughter one another in pursuit of The Prize. The Prize is always spoken of in capitals, but hardly seems worth the effort once you find out what it is.

Meanwhile, in the present, Alan North, playing his old role from *Police Squad* straight, is mildly perturbed to find his precinct becoming hip-deep in decapitated stiffs. His forensic expert, Roxanne Hart, promptly shows her complete investigative professionalism by falling for Lambert, who reacts by retreating into flashbacks about his 14th century love life. While all this is going on, rampaging psychopath Clancy Brown is giving him a hard time in both eras.

Once again, I'm afraid, it's the script that's to blame for most of the film's deficiencies. We're given all the rules of the game, but no one bothers to explain why these immortals exist, why they have to fight for The Prize, or how they even know about it in the first place. People behave illogically or out of character whenever it's necessary to advance the plot, and the implicit attitude towards women – especially in terms of physical and psychological violence – seems pretty unhealthy to my tender *Guardian*-reading sensibilities.

What the film does have going for it is stylish direction, a breathless pace and some exquisite camerawork. The performances aren't bad either, especially Brown and Connery, who are so far over the top they're practically in the next trench. So despite its shortcomings, this is one to catch if you can; it's thoroughly entertaining, and it won't look nearly so good on video.

The video shelf, on the other hand, seems the natural destination of **House** (15), a perfunctory low-budget horror film from the prolific New World studio. This is film making by numbers; from the moment best-selling horror hack Roger Cobb (William Katt) moves into a spooky old house to write a book about his experiences in Vietnam, we're a constant scene ahead of the script. The rubber monsters all appear precisely when and where we expect them to, and are equally casually disposed of. Eventually, about halfway through, everyone concerned visibly throws in the towel and starts playing the film for comedy; this doesn't work either, as by this time the thrust of the narrative, with flashbacks to Cobb's wartime experiences, is becoming progressively darker.

And this is why *House* fails; a great idea for a horror film – the trauma of combat fatigue leaving a man vulnerable to attack by the supernatural – has been squandered on yet another tired old haunted house story. The flashbacks carry a real sense of menace, evoking the tension, the terror, the pain and suffering of war; and the paranormal just can't compete with that. Pity.

Something that can compete, though in a different way, is the simple exuberance of Stephen Spielberg. It's been 3 years since **ET** (U) went home and Universal withdrew every print from circulation; now it's being re-released to delight a whole new generation of tiny tots, and, presumably, Spielberg's accountant. Sure it's corny, mawkish, and some of the images are just a little too perfectly composed; but who cares? Enjoy.

Likewise **Pinocchio** (U), Disney's second animated feature; forty-six years old now, and still as fresh and delightful as it was on first release. The sheer artistry of the painters and animators is breathtaking; so give yourself a treat, and take this one in. If you miss it, it won't be round again for another seven years.

And finally, may apologies to **Daryl** (U). Neither of us got to see this one, as it fell neatly into the gap between Colin's last deadline and me picking up the assignment. So here's a still to be going on with, until it comes around on video.

THRUD THE BARBARIAN

Alternative Rules for Psionics

ALL IN THE MIND

by Steven Palmer

Introduction

If, like myself, you have used the psionics rules given in the *PHB* and *DMG*, you will probably have found them time consuming, unwieldy and lacking in cohesion and depth. What seems to be lacking is any appreciation of what Psionics is. This article puts the emphasis on abilities, and adds an extra dimension at high levels.

Psionic Types

There are four main types of psionics – non, latent, psionic and master. Also available are the grandmaster and transcendant categories, both of whom have extra-ordinary mental powers. Non-psionics have no mental ability whatsoever and can never gain any, short of a deity's intervention. Latent psionics have a very minor ability, which remains dormant until the individual is in a stress situation – when it becomes active for a short time. If such an occurence happens, there is a GM modifiable 50% chance of the ability actually being usable. What constitutes a stress situation is up to the GM, but they should be rare events – such as a particularly tricky fight or problem. Psionics are active mentalists – but they are able to use the lower abilities only *(qv)*. Master psionics can use both upper and lower abilities.

In the exceptionally rare cases of grand-master and transcendant psionics, they can use the supreme and summit abilities respectively. These characters should not come two-a-penny; a grandmaster psionic will be superior to all but the most powerful and wily characters. Transcendants should be one or two per campaign!

Getting Psionics

This is basically the same as in the *PHB*. A 16+ in one of INT, WIS or CHA is still required. If a character finds he has no ability, he may try for latent psionics *(qv)*.

If you use family trees, you might like to add a bonus to the percentile chance if one of the character's parents, grandparents or great-grandparents was an active psionic. Add three per cent if a parent (thus a 00 chance becomes a 97 chance), two per cent if a grandparent, and one per cent if a great-grandparent. These bonuses should be GM-modifiable; if a character has two master psionic parents, a large second bonus could be added. Clearly these sorts of modifications can only apply to those families the GM has considered in great detail. I find family trees very worthwhile, and certain lines having psionic tendencies does lend an air of continuity and self-consistency to a campaign.

Classes

Something which has frequently bothered me is the random nature of the abilities gained by psionic characters. I have created seven classes of ability, and the majority of psionics will have closely related abilities drawn from one class. Some characters, according to Table 1, can have two or three classes, making them more versatile:

Table 1

number of classes	% chance
1	01-85
2	86-99
3	00

The classes are communicator, compulsor, kinetic, modifier, perceptor, soliptor and transferer, and have abilities according to Table 2 (see bottom of this page).

GMs can either roll for the class(es) gained, or choose as they see fit for the character – for example a cleric solpitor.

Once the class has been determined, the number of abilities within that class must be found, using Table 3 for psionics, and Table 4 for master psionics –

Table 3

number of abilities	% chance
1	01-33
2	34-67
3	68-84
4	85-00

Table 4

number of abilities *(lower-upper)*	% chance
2-1	01-22
3-1	23-41
4-1	42-58
2-2	59-72
3-2	73-83
4-2	84-91
3-3	92-97
4-3	98-00

In the cases of psionics with more than one class, the above tables are used, but the GM chooses or rolls for one of the classes. The first ability is gained from that, then any others in class sequence up to the character's maximum. Note that master psionics gain all their lower abilities first, then move on to the upper ones.

Table 2

communicator	compulsor	kinetic	modifier	perceptor	soliptor	transferer
animal telepathy	domination	body equilibrium	body weaponry	clairaudience	cell adjustment	blink
empathy	hypnotism	fracturing	invisibility	clairvoyance	health sense	dimension door
ESP	influence	levitation	phasing	detect magic	mind over body	dimension walk
ventriloquism	possession	molecular agitation	size alteration	object reading	suspend animation	object teleport
mind reading	mass domination	flight	aura alteration	detection	body control	astral projection
telepathy	telempathic projection	molecular manipulation	illusionism	scrying	healing	ethereality
voicing	telepathic projection	telekinesis	shape alteration	sensitivity to psychic impressions	mind bar	teleportation

Note – each class is split into four lower and three upper abilities.

New And Changed Abilities

There are a few differences to the abilities as given in the *PHB*, though most are essentially the same.

Ventriloquism – this is similar to the spell of the same name, the user being able to throw his voice, but also to disguise it with only a small chance of failure.

Mind Reading – this is best thought of as 'deep ESP', with hidden, but not subconscious, thoughts being readable.

Voicing – this is rather like one-way telepathy. The user can make his voice sound in the receiver's mind, but no reverse communication is possible. The limitations are as telepathy in terms of distance, etc.

Influence – with this ability the compulsor can effect a short term behaviour modification of the victim, though suicidal or other actions contrary to the basic nature and alignment of the creature will not be successful.

Possession – this is similar to the clerical spell, but is difficult to enforce since the victim has a save to throw off the attempt every round. Actions contrary to the basic nature of the victim cannot be attempted.

Fracturing – with this ability non-metalic objects can be fractured; eg, arms, stone statues, etc. It can also be used to start avalanches given suitable conditions.

Molecular Agitation – this ability now includes the reverse, Molecular Damping; effects will be similar to the druidic *chill metal* spell.

Flight – similar to the spell, the user being able to fly at a maximum 24", with manoeuvrability class B.

Phasing – using this, the psionic can walk through walls and other solid obstructions rather like a spectre. It is not the same as *gaseous form*.

Size Alteration – this is an amalgam of *Reduction* and *Expansion*, with the effects being as given for both in the *PHB*.

Illusionism – this ability allows the user to alter his appearance rather like the *change self* spell or disguise, with the limitations of the former, in that a save must be made by viewers. The size limitations are also as this spell.

Scrying – this is very long range (theoretically infinite) vision, the psionic's viewpoint travelling as his mind dictates. However he must remain in trance during the operation, and all his senses are blocked off from the real world. A scryer can also locate objects or persons by first concentrating, then letting his mind's eye travel to the object in question.

Detection – this allows the user to detect hidden, invisible or disguised persons or items, though ethereal, astral, out-of-phase things, etc cannot be detected.

Sensitivity to Psychic Impressions – this is now an upper ability, and is accordingly more powerful – there need not have been a particularly eventful occurence for the psionic to pick up visions of the area.

Cell Adjustment – though the same as in the *PHB*, it is perfectly possible for the reverse effect to be attempted, causing damage. A roll to hit will be required.

Health Sense – this ability allows the user to detect the state of health and alignment of any creature. The former will work on both plants and animals, the latter on any being with an alignment.

Healing – this allows the psionic to heal all ailments, injuries, diseases etc, however caused. The psionic can remove harmful or addictive drugs from a person's system, neutralise poison, and temporarily cure a psionically-induced insanity *(qv)*. Scar tissue can be removed, paralysis and blindness cured, etc. Point costs is dependent upon the severity of the case, but will vary roughly between 15 and 50.

Blink – essentially the same as the spell, but if the psionic blinks into solid material, he will be instantly transported to his original position.

Object Teleport – this allows the user to teleport non-animate objects to and from places within his field of view.

Gaining Abilities and Experience

The *PHB* proposes a somewhat artificial system of gaining abilities, and psionic level. Instead, I have designed it so every psionic has a 'degree' which is solely dependent upon the use of his mental abilities, and independent of anything to do with his profession and level therein.

GMs should alter the psionic's experience just as with normal experience, when mental abilities have been used. The degree system is based on the experience table of thieves, degree one being 0-1250 experience points, degree two being 1251-2500, and so on. For every degree attained, the psionic gains a new ability up to his maximum, and the ranges and powers of the abilities are altered as with the old 'level of mastery'. There is no degree above the twelfth, so certain abilities, eg *Animal Telepathy*, should be altered to suit the new system.

Training to Improve Type

It is possible to improve type, providing there is something to work on. This means latents can become psionics, psionics can become master psionics, and so on given time. Non-psionics can never gain any sort of mental ability. To train up to the next type, the aspirant must find a person who is at least of this type already. Then, provided the trainer is prepared to do the work, he must spend a suitably long period of time in training after which he must throw under the sum of twice his intelligence, his wisdom and half his charisma on percentiles. Success means reaching the next type with a gain of psionic strength, 3d6 if latent to psionic, 2d6 psionic to master, 1d6 for other changes. If the throw is failed then he gets to the next type, but with a d10 strength loss due to the irreversible stress damage to the mind. Once trained to the new type, the character rolls again on the appropriate table to determine the number of abilities he can acquire. This result can never be less than that originally rolled.

Example: a psionic with three lower abilities, trains to become a master. He rolls 61 on table 4, which would give him less lower abilities than he previously determined. The re-roll is 25, and he thus gains one upper ability. 99 would have gained him a lower and three upper abilities.

Latent Psionics Characters

If they fail in becoming psionics, characters can still try to be latent, though they must have a minimum score of twelve in one of INT WIS or CHA to attempt this. This is checked by throwing under the sum of intelligence, wisdom and half charisma on percentiles. If successful, the person is a latent psionic, and can have either one or two abilities (6 on d6 for the latter) drawn from one class only, which are 10% operable in a stress situation. Exactly what counts as a stress situation is up to individual GMs, but it might be a fight where the character is badly injured, or perhaps is being stalked by a giant spider, or tortured by brownies. Emotional stress can also trigger the latent psionic. When

Tim Sell © 1986 'Clash Of The Mind Masters'

determining strength, the character rolls 2d20. Latents can only ever be degree one, and it is at this degree that their ability(s) is used. There is no strength bonus due to high intelligence, etc.

Latents can train to be psionics, though they will usually be quite weak compared to others because of the initial limitations. They can never engage in psionic combat.

Insanity

All characters of type psionic and above have unavoidable insanities due to the stress in their minds. These are either permanent character traits, or – more likely – stress-induced insanities, some of which can be quite debilitating. Insanities are a useful play-balancing mechanism, and add interesting and often unexpected twists and traits to a character. The insanity of any particular psionic will worsen as he increases in degree. GMs can either roll on Table 5 or choose:

Table 5

1 Dipsomania	11 Arsonist
2 Kleptomania	12 Obsessive
3 Schizoid	13 Paranoia
4 Pathalogical liar	14 Phobia
5 Monomania	15 Hallucinatory Insanity
6 Dementia Praecoxia	16 Sadism
7 Melancholia	17 Dependence
8 Masochism	18 Hebephrenia
9 Delusional Insanity	19 Catatonia
10 Schizophrenia	20 Special/Unusual

All but five are as the *DMG* (pp 83-4). An Arsonist is obsessed with fire, setting light to things or just playing around with it; an Obsessive is someone with mild to medium monomania; Phobics should have a randomly determined phobia (those drawn from *Call of Cthulhu* are excellent); Dependants are those persons dependant upon some drug, situation or emotion to keep them going; finally, special/unusual is for GMs to design insanities befitting special characters. Of the above twenty, obsessives, phobics and dependents are all on-stress types. A character with any of the other will be normal except in a stress situation – then GMs must roll according to Table 6 to see if the insanity exhibits itself. Latents are not subject to insanities.

Table 6

psionic's degree	chance during stress
1-6	10%
7-9	13%
10-11	17%
12	25%

Twins

In the case of twins, one of whom has natural psionics, the normal procedure in determining their presence is not used for the other. Instead, there is an unmodifiable 20% chance of natural psionics being possessed, 33% if identical twins. In addition, there is an unmodifiable 20% chance, 33% if identical twins, of one of the following four abilities being present, usable at no point cost between the appropriate sibling(s) – telepathy, limited telepathy (one mile range), empathy, and knowledge of position of sibling.

Psionics Versus Non-psionics

It is possible, in the manner of the *DMG*, to throw psychic energy at non- and latent psionics (whether their abilities are 'on' or 'off'). Rather than the multifarious effects of the *DMG*, a simple stun is effected which lasts for three plus the psionic's degree hours. The victim (only one at a time) has a save against breath weapon, but no modification should be made for magic or protection of any kind. To throw psychic energy, the psionic must have 100+ strength at the beginning *and* the end of the attempt. Range is line-of-sight.

Recovery of Strength

The recovery of psionic strength can be achieved at any time, providing the psionic is not engaged in hard exertion:

Table 7

activity	recovery (STR/hour)
heavy (eg, running, combat)	–
light (eg, walking)	2
resting (but mind active)	4
meditating (or equivalent)	8
sleeping	16

Restrictions

I place very few restrictions on psionics, the major one being that monks can never have any sort of psionics due to their own peculiar brand of mental training, which blocks or destroys any ability they may have had. Other than this any race or class can be psionic, and there should be no restrictions by class to certain abilities, as in the *PHB*, since ability is programmed into the brain long before apprenticeship starts. By the same logic, it should be possible for special persons to have discovered their mental ability at a very young age, and thus have high degrees unusually early (this is not recommended for player characters)!

Grandmasters and Above

There are two further psionic types, grandmasters and transcendants, though at such high levels of power the distinctions become rather blurred! Grandmaster are able to use one or both supreme abilities, whilst transcendants have access to a summit ability. To determine for grandmasters, roll a d6 – a 6 indicates both supreme abilities can be gained. The abilities are as Table 8:

Table 8

communicator	compulsor	kinetic	modifier	perceptor	soliptor	transferer
mass voicing	animal mesmerism	incandescence	ability copying	multi-detection	rainbow envelope	perfect teleportation
mind searching	mob control	multikinesis	rejuvenation	pastviewing	energy creation	channel teleportation
infinite telepathy	telepathic imprinting	weather control	temporal adjustment	expanded scrying	infinite resurrection	spatial alteration

Ability Descriptions

The above abilities are not like normal psionic abilities; they should be given the individuality that lends itself to such high levels, and GMs are free to alter and modify the basic descriptions given below to suit their own characters and campaigns.

Mass Voicing – this is similar to Voicing, but can be used to communicate with far more people. The receivers need not be in the same area, but must be either visible or known to the user.

Mind Searching – with this, the psionic can scan a person's mind and discover any fact that the person knows or has stored in his memory, right down to subconscious thoughts and memories.

Infinite Telepathy – this, as its name suggests, is telepathy unlimited by distance, planar considerations, etc. The only thing needed is the name of, or a little background information on, the person to be communicated with.

Animal Mesmerism – this is the control of large numbers of animals to do the psionic's will – eg, stampede.

Mob Control – the user can control large crowds of people, perhaps using them to riot, force a gate, etc.

Telepathic Imprinting – this ability allows the permanent changing of any person's behaviour patterns, though the effect can be reversed by a soliptor with *Healing*, given enough time. However, changes where the creature's nature would be totally reversed (eg, a strongly LG drow) would either turn the victim insane or kill it.

Incandescence – as its name implies, this ability is a drastic improvement on Molecular Agitation. The reverse is similarly more powerful.

Multikinesis – this is the telekinesis of more than one object, though all must be in the sight of the user (including by percepting).

Weather Control – large scale *weather control* (similar to the druidic spell) can be effected with this ability.

Ability Copying – this allows the user to copy any *natural* ability (not learned ones such as thieving, or spell casting), and subsequently use it, with PS as the energy source. For example the psionic could copy a breath weapon, demonic ability etc.

Rejuvenation – this, if exercised continuously from the moment it is acquired, will virtually stop ageing from then on. Any breaks in use of over a day or so should result in a proportion of previously gained years suddenly returning.

Temporal Adjustment – this is a fancy name for time travelling. GMs are advised that it is wise to finalise their own concepts of time before trying this, as things can get very complex and confused ....

Multidetection – this enables the user to detect anything about a creature, object, situation, etc, such as alignment, magic, poison etc. The detective spells of a previous *WD* are excellent source material.

Pastviewing – this ability allows the psionic to see into the past events of the area he is in. All events back to ten years per degree (cumulative) can be seen, though a complete scan of past happenings would take some subjective time, and a lot of psionic strength. All occurences within, or which would have been within the psionic's sight, can be seen.

Expanded Scrying – this is basically an improvement on *Scrying*, the user being able to expand his senses in three dimensions rather than one, or very much further in a given time in one dimension.

Rainbow Envelope – this is an effect the soliptor generates in his mind, which surrounds an opponent. It will cause seven effects, which GMs can determine for themselves. One example could be *slow*, nausea, pain, unconsciousness, loss of INT, WIS, STR, etc. The psionic gains one new effect per degree above the one at which he gained the ability, with a new colour; the visual effect is of a coloured bubble around the victim.

Energy Creation – this is a function which enables the soliptor to create the equivalent of an electrical fireball, which will do one d6 damage per degree. It is fully controllable in speed and direction up to the point of impact, though there is a maximum time for which it will exist before exploding of its own accord. One bolt can be created per degree.

Infinite Resurrection – this allows the psionic to resurrect a body, elf or human, however long it has been dead, given some part of the body to work with. There is no limit to the person's length of time dead.

Perfect Teleportation – as its name implies, this is teleportation without the percentage errors of normal teleportation. The user also gets a chance to view the landing site before he appears, and thus 'fine tune' the exact spot of appearance. Within small limits, he can also delay the time of arrival – eg, by a round or so.

Channel Teleportation – this is similar to Perfect Teleportation, but is without the 'fine tuning'. However, the psionic can open secondary teleportation channels to transfer other persons to the same destination.

Spatial Alteration – this allows the transferer to play around with space and matter itself. By moving blocks of matter, he can cause any number of effects from creating water to a meteor swarm. The matter to be moved must either be in his sight, or well known. Thus, a meteor swarm could be created by swapping the matter in a meteor that he sees in the sky, with the air at ground level, etc. Note that while there will be limits to the mass moveable, these will be very large!

Statistics For New Abilities

Most of the extremely high level abilities should use all of the psionic's strength, since they are so powerful, and GMs might like to introduce a 'tiring' factor to limit their usage. This will simulate the stresses put on the psionic's mind, and curtail the ability dominating every aspect of play by being too easy to use.

For the lower and upper abilities, a table is given below which ennumerates the various statistics. 'TOC' stands for 'time of concentration', 'Zdeg' for 'degree' and 'r' for 'round'.

ability	range	duration	area of effect	cost	save
animal telepathy	as PHB				
empathy	as PHB				
ESP	as PHB				
ventiloquism	20′	TOC	hearing range	1/round	no
mind reading	150′	TOC	one creature	4/round	no
telepathy	as PHB				
voicing	as telepathy	TOC	one creature/deg	1/round	no
domination	as PHB				
hypnotism	as PHB				
influence	60′	1 turn	one creature	6	yes
possession	30′	as victim's save	one creature	10/r	yes
mass domination	as PHB				
telempathic projection	as PHB				
telepathic projection	as PHB				
body equilibrium	as PHB				
fracturing	100′/deg	instantaneous	20′(contin)/deg	10	no
levitation	as PHB				
molecular agitation	as PHB				
flight	1hour/deg	individual	1/5 rounds	no	
molecular manipulation	as PHB				
telekinesis	as PHB				
body weaponry	as PHB				
invisibility	as PHB				
phasing	–	TOC	individual	1/2 rounds	no
size alteration	–	5r/degree	individual	2/round	no
aura alteration	as PHB				
illusionism	–	1 turn/deg	individual	1/round	yes
shape alteration	as PHB				
clairaudience	as PHB				
clairvoyance	as PHB				
detect magic	as PHB				
object reading	as PHB				
detection	sight	TOC	individual	1/round	no
scrying	enormous	TOC	individual	1/2 rounds	no
sensitivity ps.im.	as PHB				
cell adjustment (with 1 strength point per hp damage caused)	as PHB				
health sense	touch	TOC	one creature/ object	1/round	no
mind over body	as PHB				
suspend animation	as PHB				
body control	as PHB				
healing	–	permanent	one creature	variable	no
mind bar	as PHB				
blink	–	instantaneous	individual	6	no
dimension door	as PHB				
dimension walk	as PHB				
object teleport	sight	instantaneous	one object	6	no
astral project	as PHB				
ethereality	as PHB				
teleportation	as PHB				

Ms Bara

GHOST JACKAL KILL

A Call of Cthulhu Scenario

by Graeme Davis

Introduction

This adventure has been written as a prequel to Games Workshop's *Call of Cthulhu* scenario, ***The Statue of the Sorcerer,*** but it is complete in itself and does not rely on any information from that supplement. The action takes place in and around San Francisco in the Spring of 1924; for reasons which will become clear, it cannot easily be used in any other setting. One of the investigators (or, if necessary, an NPC acquaintance) should be a graduate student in the Archaeology Department of the University of San Francisco, conducting research in Palaeolinguistics, the study of ancient languages.

Plot Summary

Paul Collins, an ex-stage magician, was working as an adviser to Theda Bara, the famous actress, on a picture which was to re-launch her career – an adaptation of Marie Corelli's gothic Egyptian romance *Ziska*. As the Great Manzini, Collins had travelled the vaudeville circuit, though fame and fortune had never really threatened him. He was, however, very interested in the mysteries of Egypt, and his stage show featured an Egyptian theme, which is how Theda Bara found him.

Collins was already well-read on the subject of Egyptian archaeology, mythology and magic, and researched further, as well as collaborating in a screenplay which eventually owed very little to Corelli's original novel. In Mawley's a small bookshop specialising in esoteric subjects, he found a copy of *Nameless Cults* (Golden Goblin edition), which had been reserved for Hauxley Trevanian, a San Francisco orientalist and cult leader. He was sold the book by mistake, and used it to construct a mock ritual which was to be the crowning point of the film. He did not study the book in any detail, and had no idea that an incantation that he took from the book was part of the spell Contact Hound of Tindalos.

With preparations for the film well underway, freelance journalist Isadora Turner was invited to the house which Theda Bara shared with her husband, director Charles Brabin, to write a magazine feature which was to set the publicity machine rolling. Collins acted out part of the ritual scene with Theda Bara for Miss Turner's benefit, and spoke the incantation for the first time, making accidental contact with a hound of Tindalos in the process. He collapsed from shock, and Miss Turner was quickly ushered out.

Also, as part of the publicity for the forthcoming picture, Bara and Collins had begun to co-write a series of romantic mystery stories with an Egyptian flavour, using the pseudonym 'Ziska-Charmozel' after the leading character in the novel. The first of these had been completed and sent to the popular fiction magazine *Black Mask*. It was being considered for publication when the mishap occurred, and Theda Bara approached the magazine to try to get the story back. The editor, Phil Cody, declined to return the story, pointing out that all submissions were the property of the magazine until publication or rejection. When there were renewed pleas for the return of the story, and Collins died in a manner which (purely by coincidence) was similar to an event in the story, Cody became suspicious, and called upon the expertise of one of the magazine's regular contributors, an ex-private detective called Dashiell Hammett.

Hammett was able to make the connection between Bara and Collins, and uncovered the name 'Ziska' and the plans for Theda Bara's comeback.

The news of Collins' death also aroused the curiosity of Isadora Turner, who has a shorthand transcription of the incantation, and is trying to find out what it is.

Meanwhile, Trevanian, too, has not been idle. Mawley stalled him for a while with tales of difficulties and delays in transporting the book from the New England auction-rooms where it was purchased, but eventually he was forced to admit he had mistakenly sold the volume to someone else. Professional ethics prevented him from giving Collins' name and address to Trevanian, so finally Trevanian's cultists broke into the shop, killed Mawley, and ransacked the files, finding out Collins' address and removing everything which showed that Trevanian had ever been in correspondence with Mawley. They then broke into Collins' apartment and took the book, which is now in Trevanian's possession.

A Translation

The scenario starts when a telephone call is received at the Archaeology Department of the University of San Francisco (if a PC works or studies there, he or she could take the call; otherwise an NPC will have to make introductions). The caller gives her name as Isadora Turner, and a Know roll will inform the player that she is a freelance journalist whose work has appeared in a number of popular and society magazines.

'I have something I would very much like to have translated,' she explains. 'I believe the language is ancient Egyptian. May I come and see you?'

If the investigator agrees to see her, Miss Turner will arrive after about half an hour. She is a slim but strongly-built woman in her mid to late twenties, with dark eyes and reddish-brown hair, and her clothes reflect her success in her profession.

Without preamble, she sits down and opens a small reporter's notebook, filled with shorthand.

'I'm afraid I only have an approximation to the sound of the words,' she says. 'I have no idea of how they might be written down, either in English or in Egyptian heiroglyphs. Now, shall I try to set them down in English letters, or would you prefer me to read them to you?'

Miss Turner will not be prepared to discuss the context in which she came across the words, no matter how heavily the investigator stresses its importance. All she will say is: 'They have to do with a story I was working on; I'd prefer not to say any more than that.'

If Miss Turner writes the words down, they will appear roughly as follows:

'Iya h'neghriffkthn akhtnakhthngai y'ghrtfthgn
Iya ai'f ngahn'g ghnakhngn
Tih'ndlnsh ai'h 'ngahn'g ai'h.'

If she reads the words aloud, the investigator must make a Cthulhu Mythos roll to realise they are part of a Mythos spell, and that it would probably be wise to stop her before she completes the passage. If either she or the investigator reads the complete passage aloud, the reader will lose 1D3 SAN (no SAN roll) and 7 Magic Points, and will suddenly feel an overpowering malign intelligence clawing at his/her mind. If the investigator is reading the words aloud, he/she must make a POW x 3 roll to avoid passing out; if Miss Turner is reading them, she will scream and collapse after reading the last word. If no-one reads the words aloud, nothing untoward will happen.

The words are, in fact, an incantation used in a version of the spell Contact Hound of Tindalos, and any character who reads the complete incantation aloud will make contact with one of these entities (refer to the monster description in the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook for the consequences of such contact), which will arrive in 10+2D10 days. The investigator will, however, have no way of knowing this unless he/she is already familiar with the spell.

If Miss Turner writes the spell down, a successful Archaeology, Linguist or Read Egyptian Heiroglyph roll (according to the keeper's preference) will confirm that the words are not in ancient Egyptian; in fact, they are in no language the investigator has ever seen.

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As mentioned above, Miss Turner will not disclose where or how she came upon the incantation, but if either she or the investigator has read it out in full and suffered the ill-effects described above, she will gasp: 'That's what happened to *him*!', or something to that effect. She will refuse to be drawn further, however, and will make to leave.

The investigator may attempt an Oratory roll in order to convince her of the seriousness of the incantation (only if he/she has actually realised its significance!). If this roll is successful, she will say:

'I heard these words uttered while I was researching a story. I believe the man who uttered them is now dead.' Then she will leave the office. Immediately the investigator should make a Spot Hidden roll – success indicates the investigator notices two pieces of paper on the floor. Miss Turner evidently dropped them from her notebook.

One piece is a newscutting, reporting the death of Paul Collins. It features a photograph of the deceased, which is ringed round in pencil. The cutting reads as follows:

> 'Paul Collins, retired stage magician and now Hollywood technical consultant, was found brutually murdered in the early hours of April 11th. His body was discovered by an officer of the California Highway Patrol, lying by his car on the coast road a few miles south of San Francisco, seriously mutilated. There were signs of a violent struggle inside the car; several windows were broken, and the seats torn to shreds. Police have concluded that Collins picked up a hitch-hiker on his way to San Francisco, and that his passenger attacked him as he drove towards the city, causing the car to crash. A manhunt is underway for the murderer, whom the police describe as a dangerous psychopath, probably with some injuries from the crash.'

The second piece of paper is a leaf from the notebook, filled with shorthand notes. Any character who has the relevant skill may attempt a Read Shorthand; otherwise, they may take it to the Department secretary or to any typewriting agency (of which there are several in San Francisco) to have it 'deciphered'. Rendered into longhand, the fragment reads as follows:

're preparation Ziska, expected start April/May. Assistant Tahamut – obvious false name – officiates. Check book name correspondences. He and TB run through ritual – apparently genuine. Final ritual in tomb with many followers – Ziska's crowning moment. TB lays on coffee table, T reads incantation over her ....'

Research

The investigators may think of checking various newspapers for corroboration and further details of the story in the cutting. A successful Library Use roll will reveal most of San Francisco's daily newspapers carried the story in their April 12th editions; the story is not substantially different in any of the papers, and a Journalist reading the various reports may conclude, on a successful Know roll, that most – if not all – of them originate from a single source, probably a police press release.

If the name 'Ziska' is investigated, a successful Library Use roll will reveal a novel with that title was written by 19th-century author Marie Corelli; on a Luck roll, the investigators may obtain a copy of the book, which is currently out of print. Any character may read the book in a number of hours equal to 23 – EDU score; it is a gothic melodrama about an ancient Egyptian dancer named Ziska-Charmozel, who became the concubine of an Egyptian general and was murdered by him. She is reincarnated in the 19th century to take her revenge on her lover, who in his turn has been reincarnated as a French artist resident in Egypt. The novel is a fairly passable occult romance, but has no apparent sinister overtones.

The investigator can call upon 'a few friends' at this point, and begin to investigate the case. Having gathered the incantation is part of a ritual that was or is to be conducted, and that it is in some way connected with the death of Paul Collins, there are three courses of action open apart from this basic research, which can be conducted at any time: to follow Miss Turner, to visit the site of the crash, and glean some information from the police. Once the

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investigators have covered two out of these three options, they will attract the attention of Dashiell Hammett (see **Plot Summary**), and the keeper should go immediately to the section **A Meeting**.

Following Isadora Turner

The investigator must act immediately Miss Turner leaves the office if he/she wishes to pursue this option; she has not left an address, and it will be almost impossible to find her without checking every hotel in San Francisco.

Miss Turner is not quite sure what to make of all the facts she has uncovered, but her reporter's instinct tells her she is onto one heck of a story.

She has already told the investigator more than she wanted to, in all probability, and when she arrives at the small hotel where she is staying (the first place she will go to after leaving the University), she will realise she has lost the newscutting and a page of her notebook. She doesn't want to share this story with anyone, and if she begins to suspect she is being shadowed (see **Appendix** for shadowing procedure) she will try to throw the investigators off, usually by moving very quickly through a succession of crowded places such as railway stations or department stores. If she does not suspect she is being shadowed, she will stay in her hotel until about 6pm, and then leave in her car and drive to Los Angeles, where she will pull up in front of a large house in the movie-star quarter of Bel Air. She will knock on the door, which is opened by a servant, and – after a brief exchange – will return angrily to her car and drive back to San Francisco, spending the rest of the night in her hotel. The hotel caters for female clients only; male visitors are not allowed, and no man will be able to get past the hotel's formidable concierge except by force. The police will be called in the event of any trouble.

If the investigators try to find out whose house Miss Turner visited, a Library Use roll will reveal it belongs to a Mr Charles Brabin. If any of the investigators is a movie buff (ie, has expressed an interest in the movies during previous adventures – the keeper should try to be more subtle than just saying 'OK – who's a movie buff?'), they will know that Charles Brabin is a film director, the husband of

retired actress Theda Bara (see **Appendix**). In the absence of a movie buff, the keeper might permit any investigator to realise this on a successful Know roll; this information will automatically come to light on a successful Library Use roll if the name Charles Brabin is investigated.

The Site of the Crash

In the newscutting, the crash is said to have taken place on the coast road a few miles south of San Francisco – if the investigators have obtained a police photograph of the crash site by this stage (see **San Francisco Police Department** below), they will be able to locate the precise spot on an INT x 5 roll (using the highest INT in the group) while driving along the road; otherwise, an INT x 3 roll will be needed.

There is little to be seen at the crash site now; the wrecked car has been towed away, and there is no trace of fire. An Idea roll will lead to the discovery that there are no tracks either – it seems that the site was completely cleaned up after the removal of the car and body. A Spot Hidden roll at the site of the crash will reveal the body of a small bird by the roadside. It has decomposed to the extent that bones are visible, and it seems to be lying in a small pool of bluish slime.

Keeper: *This slime is a trace of the pus from the Hound of Tindalos that killed Collins – see the monster description in the* ***Call of Cthulhu*** *rulebook. This trace counts as poison with a potency of 7. If a sample is taken for analysis, the keeper should note it will eat through an organic container in 1D3 hours and through a metal container in 1D6 hours. A successful Chemistry roll on the part of an analyst working with a fully-equipped laboratory will reveal the slime is composed of a number of exotic elements and unknown compounds, combined together in a way that seems to contradict the laws of conventional chemistry – further, a successful Zoology or Biology roll on the part of the analyst will reveal the slime is alive after a fashion. Both discoveries will cost the analyst 1 point of SAN unless a successful SAN roll is made; an NPC analyst may find the results too disturbing to report on truthfully.*

San Francisco Police Department

If the investigators enquire at the Police Department about the death of Paul Collins, they will be given a copy of the official press release, which contains only the information already in the newscutting. A police contact or a successful Law roll coupled with a Credit Rating or Oratory roll will be necessary to get further here. If the investigators have already met Hammett (see **A Meeting** below), he will already have gleaned as much information as is available from this source.

The incident report filed by the officer who found the body states the car's motor was still running when it was found, and that it had apparently run off the road and stopped. One door was open, and all the windows had apparently been blown out, as if an explosion had taken place inside the car. The roof of the vehicle was buckled upwards, as if by the same cause. The body lay on the ground a few feet from the open door, heavily mutilated as if by a large and powerful wild animal, and bearing traces of a caustic blue slime. This slime was also found inside the car, and the car's upholstery was heavily slashed. Samples of the blue substance were taken for analysis. An autopsy report gives the cause of death as multiple lacerations, but cannot establish whether these were caused by a weapon or a wild animal. The case is classified as an unsolved, probable homicide. A police photograph is included with the report, as is a copy of the press release.

Further Law and Credit Rating/Oratory rolls will be necessary to see the laboratory report on the blue slime. The details of the report can only be understood on a successful Chemistry roll, but the gist of it is that conclusive analysis was not possible. A Chemistry roll will reveal that the substance appeared to be organic but was not carbon-based (a Chemistry or Biology roll may be needed to remind the investigators that all known life is carbon-based); the chemical composition could not be determined conclusively. If enquiries are made about the analyst who wrote the report, a Fast Talk or Oratory roll will yield the information that he is on indefinite leave for medical reasons.

Bribery or police contacts could also be used to examine Collins' personal effects; of most interest are a pocket notebook and a business card.

Steve Begg © 1986 - 'Hound Of Tindalos'

The card gives the address and telephone number of Mawley's Antiquarian Bookshop in San Francisco, and the notebook contains several references to the name Ziska and brief descriptions of a number of rituals; an Archaeology, Anthropology or Egyptology roll will reveal some of the notes are apparently authentic descriptions of ancient Egyptian religious ceremonies, whle the remainder – about one-third – are not. A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll will reveal the latter portion appear to be garbled descriptions of Mythos rituals, which seem for the most part to deal with independent races. There is not enough information here to permit the learning of spells or an increase of Cthulhu Mythos skill scores. Also among the notes is another transcription of the incantation heard by Miss Turner, and a note from Collins to himself reading 'Golden Goblin Press – track down, see if they have more'.

A Meeting

Keeper: *The keeper should use this event after the investigators have completed two of the preceding three sections. Hammett's information may alter the remaining section a little, but the Keeper should have little trouble dealing with this.*

As the investigators leave the second section, they will find a man waiting by their car. He is in his late thirties, tall and solidly built, but not overweight, with prematurely grey hair, a dark moustache and dark bushy eyebrows.

'Hammett,' he introduces himself laconically, 'Samuel D, Continental Detective Agency. I see you're interested in the Collins case. Can I talk to you about it?'

A Knowledge roll will reveal the Continental Detective Agency features in a series of stories in the pulp magazine *Black Mask*, and is a fictional institition. If confronted with this fact, or if asked to show his detective's licence, Hammett will smile.

'Okay, you got me,' he says, 'Actually I'm ex-Pinkerton, now retired. In fact it was *Black Mask* who put me onto this whole business. Since we both seem to be interested in it, though, what do you say to an exchange of information?'

At this point he is bent almost double by a fit of coughing. When it subsides, he pulls a hip-flask out of his coat pocket and takes a long swig.

'Cough medicine,' he says with a wink. 'This climate's no good for my bum lungs.'

Once the investigators agree to an exchange of information, Hammett will tell them what he knows.

'Phil Cody, the editor of *Black Mask*, called me a couple of days ago. Since I retired from Pinkerton's, I've written a few detective stories for him, and he told me he had a real mystery on his hands. About a week before Collins died, *Black Mask* was sent a story called *The Curse of the Jackal*, by someone using the name Ziska-Charmozel. It was a ghost story, with a lot of Egyptian stuff in it, to cash in on all the King Tut mania there's been this last year or so. The day before Collins died, Cody got a call from the author, trying to get the story back. He figured the story had been sent to more than one place and someone had accepted it somewhere else, but he didn't want to send it back. Instead, he pointed out that all submissions are the property of the magazine until they are either published or finally rejected. But the author kept on asking for it back – even asked him to destroy it rather than print it. The next day, Collins was found torn apart. Now it seems Ziska-Charmozel was a pen-name used by Collins in collaboration with Theda Bara, the actress – and at the end of the story the hero was torn apart by some kind of supernatural jackal, sent as a curse by the Egyptian god Anubis. Theda Bara is still trying to stop publication of the story, and Cody asked me to try and find out what's going on.'

Hammett has already visited Theda Bara:

'I couldn't get much out of her - she was too upset. Apparently she was working on a comeback with a movie based on a novel called *Ziska*, and the story was intended to get the name into print to start drumming up interest in the picture. They were going to do a whole series, right through the shooting season and up to the premiere. Collins was working as some kind of advisor, and he wrote most of the story using an old book he'd found in a second-hand bookstore. She thinks there's some kind of curse on the book, which is why she wants the story stopped; she's afraid the curse might have carried over into the story, in what's been copied from one to the other. It all sounds pretty far-fetched to me, but the police still don't know who killed Collins.'

Hammett is already familiar with all the information that can be obtained from the Police Dept, and has the addresses of the bookshop and Collins' apartment. If the investigators have not been able to see any of this, he will provide them with copies. He will be most interested to hear about Isadora Turner, and if he is shown a copy of the incantation, he will pull a sheaf of typewritten paper out of his pocket – a copy of the story – and turn a page where a practically identical passage is set down.

'Looks like gibberish to me,' he says, 'Do you suppose that's the curse?'

Hammett will be happy to accompany the investigators during the rest of the scenario, and even if they refuse his company (or refuse this offer to share information), he will shadow them until the mystery is resolved. An NPC profile is given in the **Appendix**.

From this point in the proceedings, there are four relevant courses of action open: the investigators can try to see Theda Bara in an attempt to gain further information; they can go to Collins' apartment in search of the book; they can make enquiries at Mawley's bookshop; and they can try to get more information from Isadora Turner.

Theda Bara

Hammett will caution against another visit to Theda Bara, pointing out he got all he could from her and that she was very upset by Collins' death. If the investigators do try to see her, they will be refused admittance to the Brabin house, and the police will be called if there is any disturbance.

Paul Collins' Apartment

The investigators should have obtained the address of Collins' apartment from either Hammett or the police. Once they arrive, a

bribe, Credit Rating or Fast Talk roll will be necessary to get them past the janitor, who has shut up the apartment pending the settling of Collins' will. The janitor will call the police if the investigators try to break in.

Once the investigators get into the apartment, they will find it has been thoroughly ransacked; a window from the fire escape has been forced, and Spot Hidden roll will turn up a faint footprint on the sill, made by a light rubber-soled sneaker. Hammett will immediately go to the janitor's office and phone in a report of the burglary.

Among the debris on the floor are several books on stage magic, as well as a few on Egyptian archaeology and mythology. In one corner stands a steamer-trunk, now open and empty, surrounded by a great deal of strange-looking objects which a Knowledge roll (or an intelligent guess) will identify as the props of a stage magician. Various items of personal jewellery and other valuables might be turned up on a further Spot Hidden roll, giving the impression that money was not the motive behind the break-in.

Mawley's Bookshop

If the investigators try to telephone Mawley's, there will be no answer. If they visit the shop, they will find it closed, and the blinds drawn. No amount of knocking will raise an answer. There is a back door opening onto an alley, and if this is investigated it will be found to have been forced.

Edwin Mawley, the proprietor, will be discovered in the small back office, dead. He is slumped back in his chair, and there is a single, small puncture-mark in his neck. The desk and filing-cabinet have been ransacked.

A Spot Hidden roll will turn up a small feathered darton the floor. It is less than an inch long, and seems to have caused the wound in Mawley's neck. An Anthropology roll will yield the information that the dart is one of a type used as an assassin's weapon by certain criminal gangs of the Shanghai area.

A Luck roll will turn up a carbon copy of a letter among the scattered papers. It is addressed by Mawley to Paul Collins, and refers to a book bought by the latter, a copy of the Golden Goblin edition of von Junzt's *Nameless Cults*. Mawley explains in the letter the book had been sold to Collins in error, and it should have been kept back for an old and valued client; Mawley begs Collins to bring the book back to the shop, and promises to reimburse him in full and give him, free of charge, any other books in the shop which might interest him, up to a value of $100.

A further Spot Hidden roll made in the office will reveal that the entire section of the files bearing the letter 'T' has been removed.

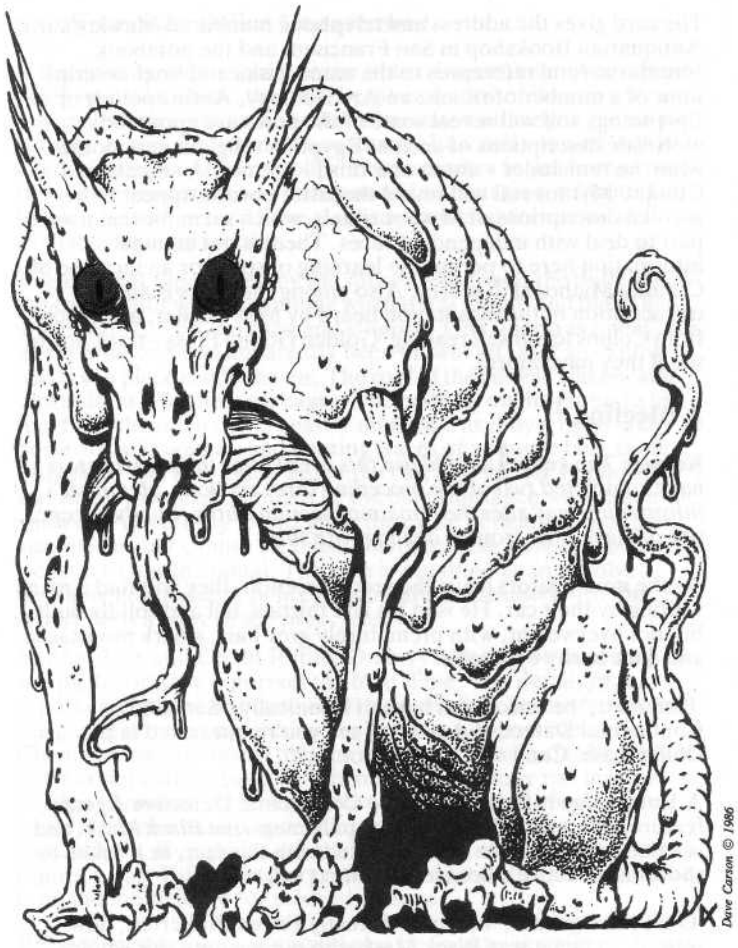
Keeper: *Hauxley Trevanian's Chinese Cultists are responsible for the break-in and murder, as well as for the burglary of Collins' apartment. The investigators have no way of finding this out, however, and will only be able to conclude the copy of* ***Nameless Cults*** *is now in the hands of someone in San Francisco's Chinese community. This is intended as a dead end, and the investigators should not be able to trace the book. More details of Hauxley Trevanian and his Chinese Cultists may come to light in further scenarios by this author.*

Isadora Turner

If any attempt is made to contact Isadora Turner at her hotel (assuming the investigators know where it is), she will have gone to New York, leaving no forwarding address. Tracking her down will be a long and laborious process, and she will be able to add nothing to what the investigators already know.

Conclusion

After a lot of detective work, the investigators should be able to piece together the truth (see **Plot Summary**), although there are a lot of false leads which may lead them in the wrong direction initially. Preventing the publication of the story, or at least the incantation, should bring a SAN reward as for defeating a hound of



Tindalos (ie, 1D20 points) *only if the investigators realise the full nature of the incantation;* otherwise, the SAN point reward is 1D6.

The keeper should note anyone who has read the incantation aloud may expect a visit from a hound of Tindalos; this may be played out in due course, when the thing arrives. The keeper should keep careful tracks of the cursed individual's movements until that time.

Hammett will be grateful for the investigators' co-operation on the case, and will help prevent the publication of the story if requested to do so. Theda Bara's planned comeback will not take place, and the novel *Ziska* will never be filmed. About a month after the scenario takes place, the investigator who was initially contacted by Isadora Turner will receive a copy of *Movie Set* magazine, with a feature by Isadora Turner entitled *Ziska - the Comeback that didn't come off.*

Postscript

In the introduction to this scenario, it was mentioned that one of the investigators - or if necessary an NPC contact - should be conducting research in Palaeolinguistics at the University of San Francisco.

A little more than a year after this scenario has taken place, in the morning of Monday, June 8th, 1925, this investigator will be roused from the musty pages of *Zeitschrift fur Celtische Philologie* by a knock at the office door accompanied by a familiar hacking cough. The character opens the door to find Hammett's long frame propped in the doorway, taking a swig from his hip-flask.

'How are you, Professor?' he asks, regardless of the character's actual academic status. 'Remember me? Hammett - Sam Dashiell Hammett. The Paul Collins case. You know, I tried three or four times to write that up as a story, but it was just too far-fetched. Well, I've got another mysterious ancient writing for you - I tried the Math Department with it, and they said it was some kind of mystical number square. Then I thought of you. What do you make of this?'

Hammett hands the investigator a small piece of paper; it is Player Handout A from the Games Workshop *Call of Cthulhu* scenario ***The Statue of the Sorcerer.***

Appendix

Shadowing Procedure

Shadowing is not defined as a skill in *Call of Cthulhu*, but for keepers who wish to add it to their list it should be treated as a stealth skill with an additional score of 10%; it is a professional skill for Private Investigators and non-uniformed police.

A successful roll must be made for every 20 minutes of shadowing - optionally it may be made every (20 - quarry's INT) minutes - and failure means the quarry has spotted the shadower. Where a quarry suspects he/she may be being followed, a Spot Hidden roll is allowed to detect the shadower; under these circumstances the shadower must make *half* a Shadowing roll to remain undetected.

Characters who do not have the Shadowing skill may attempt to shadow, using the *average* of the INT attribute score and the Hide skill score in place of the Shadowing skill score. Procedures are otherwise identical.

Theda Bara

Born Theodosia Goodman, Theda Bara (whose professional name was rumoured to be an anagram of 'Arab Death') was the archetypal 'vamp' or *femme fatale* of the silent screen. Her first film, *A Fool There Was*, was released in 1915, and her most famous roles included *Cleopatra* (1917) and *Salome* (1918). She was idolised by the public in the same way as Rudolph Valentino, and she was surrounded by a great deal of what today would be called 'hype' - one publicity tale maintained that she was born to a French artist and his Arab mistress under the shadow of the Sphinx, and endowed with occult powers. She retired in 1919, marrying director Charles Brabin. This effectively ended her career, although in the 1920s she parodied her former roles in Hal Roache two-reel comedies. She died in 1955.

Samuel Dashiell Hammett

The following is an approximate NPC profile of Hammett, based mainly on William F Nolan's biography *Dashiell Hammett: A Life at the Edge* (Arthur Barker, London, 1983).

STR 14 CON 8 SIZ 14 INT 15 POW 12

DEX 13 APP 14 SAN 60 EDU 12

Hit Points: 11

SKILLS:
Fast Talk 55%, Hide 60%, Shadow 90%, Sneak 60%, Spot Hidden 65%

WEAPONS:
Fist 70%, .38 revolver 55%

Hammett does not carry a gun unless he feels the circumstances warrant it; when he first makes contact with the investigators he will not be armed. He does not drive, following a wartime accident. He suffers from tuberculosis, and does not smoke, but he finds that whisky relieves the pain of the wracking cough with which he is sometimes afflicted. As an ex-Pinkerton detective, he has a wide network of old contacts on both sides of the law, and he seldom has any trouble in obtaining whisky for his own use.

IQ THINK ABOUT IT!

The Uses of Intelligence in Role-Playing Games

by Phil Masters

For about as long as there have been role-playing games, there has been a running dispute about one particular group of character statistics; the ones usually referred to as mental stats, and intelligence (INT for short) in particular. One quite popular recent idea is to dump this altogether, and a number of published games have done so. I think this is a mistake, and this article will attempt to explain why.

The Case Against

The argument for refusing to measure character intelligence as a number on the character sheet was forcefully supported by Pete Tamlyn in *White Dwarf* 69, in his article *Rationale Behaviour*, and he put his case well: 'as soon as an activity appears which the players can do for themselves without leaving their seats, then grey areas appear in the rules and systems break down. Consider, for example, the act of negotiating with an NPC merchant or solving a riddle found in a dungeon ....' Unfortunately, having quoted two classic problem situations, Pete turned his attention to the *Golden Heroes* Campaign Ratings system, which is primarily aimed at solving *other* problems in relationships between PCs and NPCs, and does very little about those quoted. Pete also suggested ways of adapting the system to other types of game, which might at a pinch solve one of the difficulties, but *not* the other.

Before discussing the relevance of the INT stat to all of this, I should say a couple of things. Firstly, I don't share Pete's admiration for the *GH* Ratings system. For the uninitiated, the GM awards player

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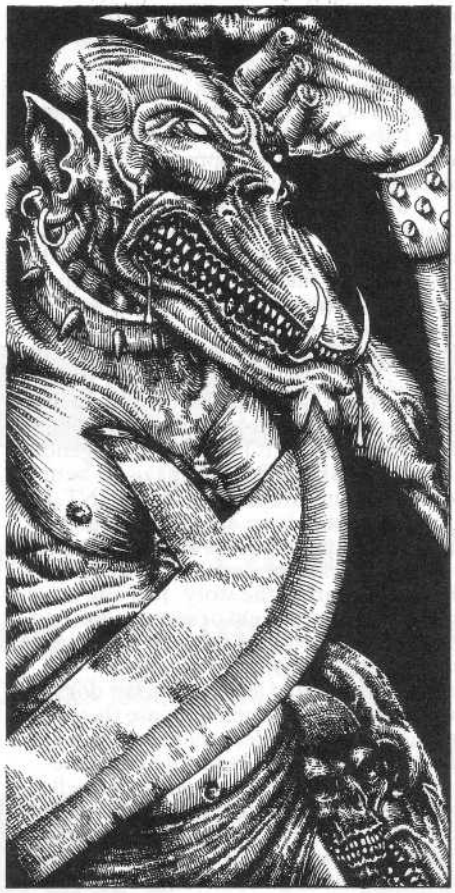
characters numerical ratings in specific areas, such as acceptance by authorities or self-assurance, and then totals the various ratings in order to assess a character's overall mental and social situation; thus, at the crudest level, being obsequious to policemen will raise your chance of co-operation from the authorities (but may lower your chance of gaining underworld contacts). Unfortunately, I believe this system is too easily abused, and that it can tend to penalise characters who are well role-played but who don't fit the system's ideals. In particular, by granting bad luck to psychologically uncomfortable characters, I believe *GH* mistreats a very important type of grim, brooding hero. In a fantasy setting, such a system might solve the problem of negotiations with a merchant, by analysing a character's social deftness, politeness and suchlike, but I believe most GMs are capable of making fair judgements of these themselves, without assistance from the rules; furthermore, I believe this approach disregards the possibility of characters having special social skills, independent of "player reality". As Pete himself says, it is hard for a GM or player who does not make a living on the stage to role-play an individual of radically different personality to their own, but most games have skill systems which allow assessment of some areas of social behaviour without too much trouble.

As an example, imagine a PC fighter trading with an NPC merchant, in a game using a well-developed skill system. As the fighter approaches the trader, the player makes a Psychology Skill roll:

GM: He looks a bit shifty.
Player (role-playing as best he can): Ho sirrah, what price eastern spices today?
GM (likewise): Ten of silver to the pound at best. **As GM:** Make another Psychology roll.
Player: Made it.
GM: He looks very shifty.
Player: Why the poor price?
GM: Times be hard, friend ....
Player: Ah well. **As player:** Anyone else around?
GM: A servant.
Player: I'll try and let him see a copper coin and signal him outside without his boss noticing.
GM: Make a Bribery Skill roll.
Player: Yes, made it.
GM: He joins you after a moment.
Player: I'll take him off for a drink and pump him for information. My *Carousing* Skill is ....

And so it goes. The fighter subsequently uses his *Bureaucratics* Skill to get the merchant arrested for illegally conspiring with other traders to manipulate prices, his *Advocate* Skill to ensure success with the case, and his *Streetwise* Skill to negotiate with the underworld gang the Merchants' Guild sends after him. At each stage, both player and GM role-play the conversations involved, but skill rolls save both sides from having to make such embarrassing judgements as "Is he lying through his teeth, or is he being run by a lousy actor?", or "Would an experienced type like this really phrase his offer of a bribe so slowly and clumsily?" Player and Character realities are distinct, but the two interact, and the *character's* social skills always provide some idea of the



subtleties that untrained *player-actors* may not be able to handle. The things campaign ratings can handle, such as standing with the authorities or reputation for toughness, can be as easily treated as modifiers to skill rolls. Similarly, I would like to suggest that an intelligence statistic can provide a useful tool in effective role-playing.

A Matter of Judgement

A classic problem with INT is best demonstrated by another example. In the course of an old-fashioned dungeon-plundering expedition, two characters become separated. One is a barbarian thug with an INT of 3, the other is an experienced wizard with an INT of 18. At different times, each of the characters separately comes upon a locked, booby-trapped, solid iron door which can *only* be passed by solving a complex puzzle painted on its face. The GM has the puzzle all prepared, and presents it (privately) to each player in turn (personally, I regard this type of dungeon puzzle as silly, implausible and tiresome, but some people insist on using the idea). Unfortunately, the barbarian is played by a forty-year-old doctor of mathematics whose other hobbies are chess, puzzle invention and finding mistakes in the theory of relativity, while the wizard is being run by a fifteen-year-old novice who only plays for the fight scenes, and who has a bad cold today anyway. If the players attempt the puzzle themselves, the results are obviously likely to be implausible; it is impossible for one to role play his character's likely response correctly, and frustratingly difficult for the other; if they simply roll dice against their INT values, the point of the exercise seems to disappear. The GM is in confusion.

Ignoring the fact that this is his own fault – after all, similar situations can arise in less artificial and stupid settings – one answer might be to drop the INT characteristic altogether and let the players do the thinking for their characters. This gives us a barbarian with the mathematical aptitude of a PhD, and a wizard with no intellectual ability outside of magic. I don't think it works.

Let's return for a moment to *Golden Heroes*, a game which *does* dump the INT stat. At first glance, one might deduce from this that one knows nothing about the intelligence of a Hero (or Megavillain, or whatever). However, this is simply not true. In this game, it is possible to roll up a character with a number of Advantageous Backgrounds and skills which imply rather a lot about their intellectual capabilities; furthermore, each character has a rationalisation which may involve details of their academic success or general ingenuity. This is a matter of taste, but I for one find it hard to believe that someone who is a Brilliant Scientist in both the physical and chemical fields, a superb surgeon and pilot, and the possessor of a cybernetically-enhanced brain, is not a better puzzle-solver than a super-strong being who is described as "dumb but ....". In other words, the problem has not gone away, and it never will so long as the game has any provision for characters using their brains; all that *Golden Heroes* does is refuse to put a *number* to intelligence. It removes the obvious problem, but frankly I think it throws the baby out with the bathwater.

What's It All About Anyway?

So, we have characters of varying intelligence, which may not match up to that of the player operating them. However, the discussion so far has involved one very silly and rather dangerous over-simplification. Intelligence has been treated as a single, measurable thing, and the only use for it I've mentioned is for solving logical puzzles. In fact, even academic psychologists would be wary of offering a short definition of intelligence, and attempts to measure it are notoriously dangerous (the famous IQ tests are currently out of fashion in most quarters). This isn't much of an argument for eliminating or sub-dividing the INT stat in games; most game stats represent simplified versions of a wide range of factors, and any attempt to break INT down further would soon get bogged down in personal views. However, it *is* worth looking at the different ways that intelligence might be used in games, and hence at the different problems which can be caused.

First, there is **character creation**. Most games give starting characters some skills or areas of knowledge and some provide knowledge of past careers. This can make some idea of character INT quite useful; jobs such as wizard or research scientist are traditionally assumed to require some grey matter between the ears, and so games can either prohibit the less intellectually gifted from entering such professions (as in *D&D*), make progress much less likely (as

in *Traveller*), or make skill acquisition much less efficient (as in *Ringworld*). However this is a problem for the game designers, and there are several ways round it. In *Golden Heroes*, the dice (mostly) decide which characters have superior intellectual attainments to their credit, but the lack of initially-rolled INT prevents too many ridiculous results, while in *Champions* it may be possible to produce a high-grade scientist or scholar with poor INT, but anyone wishing to use technical skills in adventuring situations will need a variety of skills linked to INT, and most sensible character designers will build sensible-looking characters.

The second possible game-use of intelligence is **analytical** – puzzle-solving, code-breaking, performing a multitude of simple mathematical calculations and suchlike. This kind of thing is often handed over to the players, but this is not necessarily the best idea. Solving a single, interesting problem is one thing, but suppose characters have to perform a large number of boring mental tasks, such as performing a mass of orbital calculations after their starship computer has been damaged, or decoding a large number of simply-encrypted messages in the search for some important signal? Even if the GM can be bothered to prepare every such problem in detail, few players will be willing to spend hours wading through a mass of detail. If there is no serious risk of failure, the GM can simply give the players their answers, but if real intelligence is needed to either avoid mistakes or get the job done within a time-limit (or both), then a measurement of character intelligence can be useful in assessing the dice-roll required.

The next use for intelligence is in **combat** – or other stressful situations. A stupid but well-trained or ultra-tough fighter will certainly beat a feeble intellectual in most situations, but most fictional heroes are a little more than mere mincing machines; even if they can batter their way through most opposition, they will usually display low cunning when faced with overwhelming odds (those don't tend to be boring, short-lived, *tragic* heroes, or all three). This is often the most problematic situation for the GM , as characters may be required to make a number of correct moves in quick succession, and a GM must usually do no more than *hint* at solutions if the tension and interest of a scenario is not to be destroyed. Such hints can be prompted by successful use of Tactics or Deduction skills, INT-based rolls, perception rolls and so on, and one skill that can often give an excellent simulation of brains beating brawn is Find Weakness or similar, but really difficult players (dim players running intelligent characters) may not take hints, or may come to rely on the Tactics Skills at the expense of role-playing.

Memory is another area linked to intelligence, or at least to brains. This is a difficult subject, because it is easy to imagine a blatantly stupid person – or even, say, a mindless robot – with a photographic memory, or an absent-minded genius with the opposite problem However, these are extreme cases, and *in a game situation* it may be easiest to assume intelligence and memory are linked. Again, some GMs might think players should have the job of remembering important facts for their characters, but sometimes this is not practicable; if an NPC has been hanging around a PC for weeks of game-time that have passed in minutes of playing time while little has really happened, then the *character* can be expected to remember more about the NPC than the *player* would. Similarly, if a PC has read a book the player hasn't – perhaps because it only exists in the game-world – then questions of how much can be remembered of its contents may arise. At such times, GMs may fall back on character INT as being linked to memory.

Lastly – and already mentioned above in passing – there is **perception**. Some people may not think this is linked to intelligence; after all, hawks or fish may have far better senses than any human, but far less INT. In any case, games have always been full of fairly dull-witted dwarves and elves displaying super-human perceptions., However, this is only part of the story. It is one thing to have superb eyesight or sonar sense, and quite another to use it properly. To return to the animal kingdom, even quite intelligent creatues such as tracker dogs require months of training to use their senses as their handlers want, whereas a moderately bright human who has somehow gained a comparable sense of smell would only need asking once. For a game example, suppose a group of characters entered a picture gallery in which one of the paintings had some oddity in the design of the frame, in fact because it concealed a secret door. The GM could drop a few hints without giving away too much, but there would have to be some way of deciding whether the character had happened to notice the quirk. Ultra-keen eyesight would certainly help (as would, say, skill as an art historian), but so would sharp wits; indeed, someone who took the trouble to really *study* everything they looked at could gain a reputation for keener senses than they actually possessed. Intelligence is not all there is to perception, but it is a very large part of it. Related to this point, but also to others mentioned, is the ability to identify illusions (magically induced, holograms, or whatever) for what they are – something which may require perceptiveness (to spot flaws in the image), plus analytic ability (to guess the significance of the flaw), and also willpower (Ego, Wisdom, or whatever) to concentrate on the possibility of known fact of illusory effects, despite an instinctive trust in one's own senses.

There are in fact a wide number of uses for INT, but most of the difficult situations described above can be resolved *fairly* satisfactorily by requiring a dice-roll based on INT or an INT-related skill. However, there are *still* problems involved in having players handle characters with INT different to their own, either quantatively *or qualitatively*. The first type of problem has already been described; the second can be even more annoying. An example involved a couple of friends of mine. One, the GM, a trained scientist, the other a perfectly intelligent and quite versatile player with a non-scientific degree and accountancy training. The player was running a super-heroic technologist character, and the GM set up a situation which could be solved by various imaginable uses of gadgets. Unfortunately, the player could not think herself into the right approach, and the scenario ended rather unsatisfactorily. There are *types* of intelligence as well as *quantities* ....

I Think That Just About Wraps It Up ....

There are few easy answers to real problems in role-playing, and "the INT question" is a *real* problem. However, eliminating the INT statistic is no answer; a number to roll dice against is useful in too many situations. By way of solution, I can only offer a couple of ideas.

Firstly, there is the simple fact that the name of the game *is* Role-Playing. It may be hard for players to run characters with different mental abilities to their own, but this is exactly the sort of challenge that makes these games so exciting. The mathematical genius might find it frustrating to have his brainless barbarian stymied by a simple puzzle, but presumably the barbarian character has abilities – such as strength and fighting skill – the player lacks in real life. This, in fact, is one very good argument in favour of games which allow a player greater control over character creation; the genius who really *can't* play numbskulls can be saved the embarassment of having to try.

The problem with this is that some players are faced with the opposite problem; not forgetting their own brains, but having to act with more intelligence than they possess. I'm not sure how widespread this problem really is; most participants seem to think role-playing is a sign of intelligence, and I doubt many would admit to this difficulty. However, the "types of intelligence" question is serious, as the example of the techno-genius hero showed, and probably quite widespread. The only solution I can offer is for GMs to encourage inter-player assistance, so players with talents in particular areas assist others whose characters have similar skills, and anyone running a super-intelligent character receives advice whenever possible (sadly, this doesn't always work; no such advice was available to the player of the techno-genius – still, we can always hope). Nor should GMs be afraid to offer advice to players when necessary; good role-playing should be encouraged whenever possible. I know this idea may annoy some gamers – those with a highly competitive attitude to play, who dislike the idea of co-operation, as well as those who believe every player should be striving independently to achieve great character development. To the first, I can only say that they would probably enjoy purely competitive games such as chess or simulation wargaming more than role-playing; the second group are admirable purists, and I can only ask them to tolerate others' lesser idealism.

Lastly, GMs should note that conflicts between player and character INT only arise in limited situations. It may well be that some such are unavoidable, but some are not, and the set piece puzzle is a classic example which a good GM could avoid imposing. As ever, there is no substitute for GM forethought.

HEAVY METAL

This Month:
Converting & Painting Tips from Kev 'Goblinmaster' Adams

Kev is one of the infamous Citadel designers, responsible for many ranges, including the Snotlings and the stomach-churning new range of Zombies.

Many gamers and collectors like to have their characters as customised figures, something completely different to all the rest. This article is especially aimed at those who would like to turn this desire into reality. All the figures illustrating these pages were painted and/or converted using the techniques that follow.

Conversions

Only you know exactly what it is that makes your character special, so it makes sense to prepare some rough sketches for general guidance before commencing with any conversions. It is also imperative to cut away any existing metal where the putty is to be applied, in order to keep the converted figure in proportion.

You'll need the following tools: scalpel, needle files, cocktails sticks, pin vice and drills, needle nose pliers, epoxy glue, epoxy putty (eg, Milliput, Tamiya or similar). A soldering iron may be needed for some conversions, but this kind of work shouldn't be attempted by anyone who isn't experienced in using solder. It's a dangerous tool if misused.

For the orcs, I started from the top. Three had horns added to their helmets. I drilled holes in either side (and one on top, which you wouldn't normally have to do ....)., and fashioned the horns by bending wire into the required shape. Copper wire is useful because it solders well. It is of major importance that the horns are of the same size and shape, to make sure they align properly.

Of course, I then went completely over the top, and decided on the elaborate design you see. This needed the soldering iron; a very tricky business on such a small scale, and one of the most difficult types of conversion. The main problem is getting the spikes to form a uniform pattern, an annoying task when as you solder one on, another melts off. The only advice I can offer is to exert a lot of patience.

Once the wire horns are bent into shape, they can be fixed into the holes in the helmet using two-part epoxy putty. They can then be built up using more putty. Roll out thin strips of putty the same length as the horns, and smooth them on with a cocktail stick. Again, remember to keep both horns in proportion. If you use Milliput, any excess putty can be filed away when it is dry, to get the correct shapes.

Three of the orcs have converted faces. To scratch-build onto an existing figure, the existing face needs to be trimmed away, before a similar amount of putty can be added to the head. Smooth this into the basic shape required. Then a cocktail stick can etch in the facial details; forehead, chin, eye sockets and mouth. Add the nose and work it in, followed by tiny balls of putty for the eyes. Faces can be difficult to make, and always take a long time to master, but they give that final touch of individuality to your model.

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

The orcs were dressed in three types of armour. The chainmail was fairly simple. After applying the putty and smoothing the surface, a sharpened cocktail stick or needle is used to drag opposing holes along the putty. Laminer armour is made by making a series of horizontal cuts in the smoothed putty, and then using a scalpel to push the cuts upwards. Scale armour is made in the same way as laminer, except that cuts are made vertically as well to form a grid pattern, and then the scales are pulled down (using a cocktail stick with a flat-filed end) until they overlap. While armour is still wet, tiny balls of putty can be rolled and added with a sharp cocktail stick to look like studs and rivets.

I also built additional armour onto all the orcs. There are two ways of doing this. One is to roll out the putty, and then cut it into the shapes required. The other is to add the putty to the figure and smooth it out before working in the detail. Don't add too much, however, or all your figures will look oversized.

Fig. 1: Skull Crusher Goblin Trebuchet coming soon from Citadel as part of the Machineries of Destruction Range.

Fig. 2, 3, 12, 13: Select samples of Kevin's detailed shield designs.

Fig. 4: Heavily converted C15 orc.

Fig. 5: ME44 Uruk-Hai (converted)

Fig. 6, 7, 8: Panoramic view of Kevin's latest creation, one of the New Orc Boar Riders. (converted)

Fig. 9: C12 Goblin & C14 Snotling.

Fig. 10: C15 Orc.

Fig. 11: C06 Dwarfs.

Fig. 14: Arcane Chaos Warriors.

*Fig. 15: Harboth (ROR5) displays his new livery courtesy of Kev and the New Citadel paints from **Paint Set 3**.*

Fig 16: The Goblin King's Battle Chariot: The Machineries of Destruction strike again.

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Fig. 9

Fig. 10

Fig. 11

Fig. 12

Fig. 13

Fig. 14

Fig. 15

Fig. 16

Painting

Preparation

The converted figure can now be primed. A matt white car spray primer will be adequate for this. Leave the model to dry overnight.

All the techniques that follow assume you are using acrylics to actually paint the figure, although you can produce several exciting effects with inks.

Armour

There are many different methods for painting armour, not least because there are many different metals from which armour might be made. Basically, though, iron and steel can be treated in similar fashion, except for giving steel a slightly lighter colour.

For some figures – such as the Chaos Warriors, and anything else completely covered in armour – I would actually leave them unprimed. I would wash over all the armour parts with a mix of sepia and blue inks, with a touch of some black added for dark iron. Once the first wash is dry, further washes of an orange-brown ink will give a slight touch of rust! Although you can manage additional effects with more ink washes, it is wise to remember that ink can build up and dry in ugly patches in the wrong places. When using inks, it's a good idea to use a dry paint brush or tissue to soak up any unwanted pools that may have collected.

Figures dressed in rather less armour – a breastplate, for example – should have their armour, weapons, etc painted with silver paint, and the ink wash technique should be used to 'weather' the metal. A word of warning, though; silver paint needs a day or two to dry, or it will run when the wash is applied. On the other hand, while the ink is still wet, additional silver paint should be used for highlights.

For chainmail, I use two methods. For rusty mail, I use a base coat of brown ink brushed silver, and for normal chain use black instead of the brown. A wash of sepia and blue ink over bare metal works well too.

For special effects, the tone of the metal can be completely changed by a coloured ink wash. The Chaos Warrior with spear has a blue ink wash, for example. Ink can also be added to metallic acrylics. To achieve the effect on a cyberman, a basic silver paint was used, and once that had dried a thin mix of sepia and blue ink mixed with water produced the bluish tint. A further highlight of silver with a touch of white finished the effect. Gold and brass colour paints respond well to brown, orange and yellow ink washes, while bronze can be given a corroded look with green ink.

Experiment; you never know what you'll end up with.

Faces

Generally speaking, painting flesh tones requires the same techniques as armour, but with different colours. I work from about three tones: ordinary flesh, green and yellow ochre. The flesh colour can be varied, from pallid to tanned, using a mixture of flesh, light yellow and white for the lighter skins, and using a reddish brown to give a tan. After painting on the basic tone, an ink wash of burnt sienna and yellow is applied for the shading, and then – while the ink is still wet – a lighter shade of the original colour is used for the higlights. This can be blended into the ink. Darker flesh can be washed with nut brown ink and highlighted with a lighter version of the basic mix. For a really tanned effect, add orange to the nut brown ink; and for that 'unwell' look, use grey paint in the mix.

Undead should be given a base coat of flesh with some black added, which makes the flesh look slightly putrid. A thin wash of bluish green is then applied, and highlighted with a really 'rotten' version of the basic flesh colour. When the eyes are added, they should have a final wash of white paint across the pupils, to give them a blank staring look.

Certain undead, skeletons, for example, need something a little more .... boney. Mix flesh and pale yellow paint for the base coat, and when this has dried, wash with a mixture of sepia and yellow. Add highlights by drybrushing with the original bone colour. Naturally, this is also the technique for horns and teeth.

Green flesh can be painted in the same way as ordinary flesh, only using a light green base colour for pale flesh, and a darker version for a more sombre look. A yellow ink was works well over the lighter green base, as I used on the goblin with the morning star. I also use a yellow ochre flesh colour on certain figures, because it is a fairly neutral tone and takes colour washes well. The ogre with the club was washed with yellow-green ink. For really dull flesh colours, grey and white paint can be used for the general build-up of tones, and then colour washed with ink. The ogre with the pole arm, the snotling and the goblin with the sword were painted in this fashion.

Eyes, Fur & Hair

To start the eyes, wash a darker shade of ink into eye sockets. Use nut brown for ordinary flesh, or dark green for green flesh. When the ink is dry, you can then add the eyes with a 000 brush. The pupils look most effective when a 01 Rapidograph is used.

For fur and hair, paint on the basic colour, then add an ink wash of a darker colour. A highlight of a lighter shade of the original colour can be drybrushed in if required.

Clothing

I paint clothing in the same way as armour and flesh, using a base colour, ink wash and then highlighting with a lighter version of the original colour. It's always best to aim for a fully blended effect.

Bases

To improve the general appearance of the finished model, a decorative base looks good. Spread any surplus putty on the base, and work in a grass-like texture with a cocktail stick. While this is still tacky, you can add toadstools, small plants, or anything else you fancy. Cut leaves out of rolled putty, and add the veins by using a scapel blade. A number of leaves built up like this makes a realistic plant. Blades of grass can be made by rolling strips of putty into long points.

Venus fly traps are a favourite of mine, and may be made by combining two leaves and lots of grass spikes. It is best to model fungi with wire and small pieces of putty. All these little details can be added with a cocktail stick or needle, while the putty is still wet.

Fig. 17: C23 Ogre

Fig. 18: C11 Halfling

Fig. 19: BDD2 Skeleton

Acme Patent Joke Company

Please note that this letter is coated in contact poison. Thank you for your co-operation

Letters Page,
White Dwarf,
Enfield Chambers,
16/18 Low Pavement,
Nottingham NG1 7DL

Another letters page, already? I only did one last month! Ah, well, let's see what the readers have on their minds .... this big sack writhing in the corner must be the demons in D&D debate ....

David Pearson, Nuneaton, Warks: After seeing the cover for WD75, I was very impressed by the imagination of the picture, but appreciating that some might find melting, writhing, flesh distasteful, I was not surprised to read Peter Gilroy's letter in WD76. I was disturbed, however, by Jeremy Burdock's views in the following issue, mainly as I feel I am one of those he describes. I am interested in the occult, magic and the folklore of the world, and I find being branded a devil-worshipper extremely offensive.

Devil worshippers are a dangerous bunch of fanatics who cause great harm and suffering. I am as glad to see that Mr Burdock wishes to see these evil groups crushed as I am glad that he is wise enough to realise role-playing is no more a path to evil than playing *Monopoly*. I feel his accusations against the Tarot Workshop are unfounded, as they supply only books to collectors and studiers. I am sorry he feels he has to justify playing D&D to his Christian friends, but with the growing acceptance of rpgs such narrow-mindedness is rapidly becoming a thing of the past.

Kev Lister, Leyland, Lancs: With the story *Solar Power* in WD78 and the resurgent devil-worship topic, it's time for my comment. Every rpg'er I know is a devil worshipper, the only reason for gaming is to cover up our activities. Surely the best way to hide from the moral majority is the simple ploy of "it's only a game". Any mention of devil-worship in D&D should be shunned as even denial causes the other side to sit up and take note.

Simon Fearnham, Newport, Essex: As a regular AD&Der, I am a great fan of your magazine, and this is probably not the place to air views on religion or belief systems in general. However, Jeremy Burdock's letter in WD77 cannot go unanswered, it shows a response typical of most Christians and probably many atheists too. Occultism is essentially a body of knowledge, and it is the wielder who will be the source of good or evil, not the knowledge itself. Take Tarot for instance. It is an ancient wisdom associated with the Kabal (Judaic Mysticism), but it is Tabula Rasa: if you do not believe in it, it has no power; if you believe it works for good then it is a good power; if you believe it works for evil, then it is an evil power.

Jeremy must realise that his beliefs are not the only valid ones, and therefore such an advertisement need not be viewed solely in a Christian light.

Roberta Farwen, Deaconess, Old Coulsdon: I wish to draw your attention to the recent practice you have begun for including Tarot Card advertisements in your magazine. I have had experience of youngsters getting involved in the occult through this channel and they have become seriously disturbed as a result.

I do not know what religious stance you take, if any, but I regard any dabbling — however seemingly 'innocent' — to be an extremely dangerous. Things which begin as a game turn out to have a reality which the players were unaware of at the start.

Fantasy games themselves have the capacity to open up people's psyche to occult possibilities, but I realise this may not always happen. Tarot cards, however, are more directly linked to the occult. I would ask you, therefore to cease advetising them in your journal.

D. Glynn, Birmingham: I am an active Christian and I have also been playing — and enjoying — frp for about seven years. I wish to stress that I do not believe the majority of people who play games have any connection with the occult (by which title I mean satanism, witchcraft, divination and the whole gamut) and do just play them for fun. However, recent issues of the *Letters* column do not reflect this.

In WD76, Peter Gilroy highlighted a major problem. Attention must be given to the impression games will will make on the uneducated. His remarks on the cover of WD75 were fully justified; frp games are already viewed with suspicion in some church circles due to such pieces of art as this cover.

This is not to say that simple ignorance about games on the part of the church are simply not acceptable. I know some church action groups currently studying frp games who might change your minds in the near future, if you do not respond to what people think, instead of what you *assume* people think.

Whether you alter your emphasis or introduce a little discretion as to adverts/artwork/articles is obviously your decison, and as a commercial enterprise I can see why you would wish to accept advertisements from all and sundry. However, please do not wear a false mask of neutrality in the occult debate and at the same time print adverts for Tarot. Richard Croft asks if Christians view psychics as evil in WD78; for the record, we certainly do.

Waren McGill, Eastleigh, Hants: "But I don't doubt for a minute that we haven't heard the last of this" .... and you haven't indeed. I am writing about the comments Jeremy Burdock made in WD77 about Tarot cards.

I admit that I know little about these books, but one only has to look at the ad to know that The Tarot Workshop is seriously misguiding the public! Magic?! Psychic teachings?!! I²ve never heard such a load of rubbish. Even if the book contained ways of using magic, do you honestly believe you could?

Jonathan Tyers, Sanquhaw, Dumfriesshire: I am most strongly angered at the paragraph in which Jeremy Burdock (WD77) said "magic, occult, psychic teaching, astrology, hypnosis .... having not seen any of these goods, I can only say .... props for anyone stupid enough." I would think he could restrict his criticism to things he has seen. I would like to set the record straight on the subjects of psychic teaching, astrology and the occult. I am a studying hypnotist, and would like to make it clear that this pursuit is perfectly innocent, and — in fact - can actually be highly beneficial.

D. Marley, Barnsley, S Yorks: Tarot, from its origins in the middle ages, was adopted by the Judeo-Christian Qabalists as a 'key' to the 'tree of life'. They were original playing cards, which were used for divination, a practice which was employed by Jewish priests. It was one part of the three-fold wisdom of the Jews.

I'm not an occultist, but I have studied a number of books on the subject. I know what it's about and feel qualified to comment; those without experience of both sides of the argument cannot be expected to. Terms like 'devil-worship' are a misnomer, a crude distortion of the truth.

Martin Jewiss, Solihull, W Mids: I agree with Jeremy Burdock. I am also a Christian, and recently have had to look very closely at the 'innocence' of rpgs. I am totally convinced that rpgs aren't the work of the occult, but you would be surprised at how many people think they are. I think we should all make an effort to increase public awareness of what role-playing is. I'm glad WD took the placing of the Tarot ad so seriously, and the explanation was acceptable. However, I don't think Debenhams stock magic jewellery and incense!

Thanks to one and all for some illuminating comments. I don't propose to take half a page replying to all the points, setting out the definitive WD position on religious matters — this is your page after all — but, a few words are in order.

I doubt if narrow-mindedness about rpgs is a thing of the past; we live in an intolerant age, and there are many people prepared to take a firm stand on issues on which they feel strongly. Whether we could educate those people within the religious community who dislike rpgs without having played them is one thing, but we'll never find a tolerant Christian position on what they consider to be the work of the devil.

As to what can be defined as the work of the devil, I find myself forced into a neutral position simply because of the black and white lines drawn by some of our correspondents. If all things that can be lumped together under an ill-defined version of the word 'occult' are evil and proscribable, then there are going to be matters at the boundaries of the dispute - hypnotism for one - which are undeservedly brought to task. On the other hand, I've little sympathy for the pseudo-rational "here is the true meaning of occult" brigade, who attempt to show that all these things were part of the roots of the church anyway. I can't imagine many Christians defending the actions of certain medieval popes; in the same way, I would expect them to have a modernist view of Tarot. It isn't a simple card pack any more, and that isn't the fault of the Christians. Nor, though, is it an evil artefact; as Simon said, these things are what we make of them.

We have to draw lines here at WD. If someone wanted to offer seances by the sea, I know we'd refuse the ad. Possibly, if I had been here when the Tarot ad arrived first, I might have refused that too. But how long before we are asked to refrain from advertising ***Legends & Lore*** *or* ***Cults Of Prax****? What then?*

After a short, but refreshing intermission, we'll go onto the second subject of the month, about which I have received letter bombs by the score.

Jonathan Eilbeck, Currie, Midlothian: "Quick bring out the sonic cannons .... there's some OAPs role-playing."
"Come on, sisters, let's get those sexist pigs."
"Line your troops behind the bushes, we'll ambush the kiddies"
"Fire at the AD&Ders!"
Rat-at-at-at-at. Keep up the good work.

M. Rawson, Denmead, Hants: In the *Letters* page (WD78), Paul Cockburn states that *RQ* and *Traveller* are not selling well at the moment, and so they can't be popular, and thus they will not be covered regularly. *RQ* doesn't sell well since it is no longer on sale anywhere at all (RQIII is a completely different game), but it is one of the most popular games systems; for proof see the Games Day voting (WD72) or the survey in *Adventurer 1*. *Traveller* picked up the best SF game award. The games selling well do not indicate that these are being purchased by new players - they are being bought by people like me who own 6 rpgs. There's plenty of room to cover the main games regularly and some minority ones each issue by removing the non-role-playing articles. Cut down the *Golden Heroes* coverage, and most of all: **Hold A Readers Survey in No.79!**

See what all the readers want rather than making arbitrary changes.

Andrew Warburton, Reading, Berks: Without trying to put down *Judge Dredd*, *Superheroes* and *AD&D*, but don't you think you're going a little bit overkill with these games? OK, so they may be selling well at the moment, but don't any of us hard-suffering role-players get any articles worth reading?

A certain other magazine's opinion poll showed the five most popular games to be *CoC*, *AD&D*, *RQ*, *Bushido* and *Traveller*. If you can't accept these results, I suggest you run your own poll. A simple list of your five favourite games would work adequately

I don't think you should bring back departments, but *RQ* and *Traveller* are still very popular. Far more popular, to my knowledge, than *JD* and all the 'super' games ever will be. It seems that just because GW doesn't publish *RQ* anymore, that you at *WD* (who are under the proverbial thumb as far as GW are concerned) have dropped this game like a hot potatoe.

Nevertheless, while JD and co do make an impact on the market, they deserve some coverage, but not at the expense of all the real games. As for the new titles, they are as subtle as a half brick - "Games Workshop Presents"; don't make me laugh lads, we're not naive, WD's turned into just a monthly plug by GW.

Janet & Peter Vialls, Guildford, Surrey: After hearing Paul Cockburn's brave words at *London Dragonmeet* (despite our heckling), we had some hope that our worst fears about WD would not be realised.

Oh dear, we have just received WD78.

This was an issue almost entirely given over to GW comic-based games, a three page advert for the JD game, an (admittedly amusing) short story and a two page advert for a GW board game (personally we're glad we've got the original *Cosmic Encounter* - we liked the hexagonal boards, and why hasn't GW produced the Flares?). There's virtually nothing for the mainstream role-player except a lousy D&D article of the sort that gives the game a bad name! We agree the departments have outlived their usefulness, but at least they helped maintain some sort of balance within an issue. We know GW surveys show that JD is selling, but we wonder how good an indication sales are of what games are actually being *played*. We have bought games recently, but the most recent one we play regularly was bought nearly a year ago.

Gary Billen, Weymouth, Dorset: What are WD thinking of? *RQ* is out of the Top 30, but this can mainly be attributed to the moronated spinaches at Avalon Hill. What Chaosium did can only be attributed either to them being drugged by AH agents, or the side-effects of a recent *CoC* game. The massive price increase massacred sales in Britain.

But the changes in RQIII represent major improvements and clarifications to the old system. It has now been simplified, whilst retaining and even regaining its realism. The only way to increase the popularity of RQ outside Chaosium/AH is the introduction of a wealth of material, primarily short scenarios *in the popular magazines*.

Jordi Zamarreno, Barcelona, Spain: We all know that WD is published by GW, and that the trend towards in-house products can be expected, but in the last months things have gone too far. Endless articles about *Golden Heroes*, and incredibly biased reviews of GW products (and there is one for you, Cockburn, I found your review of *Unearthed Arcana* in WD73 seriously prejudiced - defend yourself if you can).

I agree with you that the top ten games should get more attention and that the old relics must disappear. Keep this up!

Phew, I haven't been this popular since a certain magazine cut **The Sword of Alabron.** *I hate to think what might have happened if we had said WD was actually going to* **cut** *RQ and* **Traveller**, *as opposed to removing them from priveleged status.*

Anyway, let's get hung for a sheep as much as for a lamb. WD is a house magazine. There, that's said it. WD is a promotional tool for GW, and it is obvious this means the interests of GW must influence the directions WD must take. Keyword, influence. Nobody says what goes in the mag but the editor, and he has to make his decision based on what his publishers want, what his distributors can sell and what the readers want to read.

So, if 7,000 people a month are buying JD, and making it the fastest-selling rpg at the moment, then we can't ignore it.

There are other house mags, by all the other games manufacturers/importers, and they cover the same band of interests. We think our games are the best, and want people to know about them. And when we're adding **Stormbringer, Paranoia** *and* **Pendragon** *to the success of* **Call of Cthulhu** *and* **Judge Dredd** *later this year, then we're going to want to have stuff about them too.* **And** *there's going to be* **D&D/AD&D**, *which, though it isn't super-hot anymore, still has zillions of people out there, and we're going to have many other systems, as and when we can. But the old Dwarf, with its packages of bits for all the oldest but goodies, has gone. Of course, that always used to be called a house magazine too, but it wasn't admitted in polite company.*

And, yes, there'll be a Readers Survey; possibly next issue, maybe the one after.

Right, a quick race through some other subjects:

Mark Nicoll, Stockport, Cheshire: I'm one of the Mega-City fans, and I wish people would stop complaining that *2000AD* is for kids. It isn't. you give an issue to a kid and see if they can understand it. Or, for that matter, try to get a kid to play the excellent JDrpg. I'll guarantee he/she can't.

Mike McGarry, London: I'm a regular reader of *White Dwarf* and I'm writing to you to register my surprise at the lack of coverage of play by mail gaming. Pbm is probably the fastest growing part of the hobby, yet doesn't seem to warrant the occasional review. Most roleplayers find pbm an enjoyable additional to their other gaming activities.

At the first British pbm convention in January, an event of which I was co-organisor, one of the main gripes was the lack of publicity that postal gaming receives in the professional press. This situation seems to be changing, but will WD continue to ignore us?

Andrew Meek, Burgess Hill, W Sussex: Forget sexist stereo-typing, what about the stereo-typing of character classes, races, etc. Consider the 'average' fighter; it seems these are expected to be moronic, beer-swilling, sword-swinging loud-mouths. While the MUs are all dark and secretive weaklings who are lost without their 'ammo on paper'. So it continues: dwarves are taciturn blacksmiths, elves are pansies, hobbits taste nice, half-orcs are rude and dirty.

WD often has articles which say that role-playing is all important, and yet you litter your scenarios with these boring and tedious cardboard cutouts. You are not alone by any means; most commercially-produced adventures have this blemish in some measure and many so-called role-players do the same. Why?

David Burke, Southwold, Suffolk: I hope Gary Lea (WD78) will find this method for determining in which segments attacks fall useful. The system has the advantage of requiring only the standard d6 initiative roll.

An attack will occur in the (7th-initiative roll) segment - ie, segment 6 on a roll of 1, 5 on a roll of 2, etc. Where two attacks are taking place, then the second blow will occur at least 3 segments later, though in no event earlier than the 7th segment - ie, segments 6 & 9 on a roll of 1, 2 & 7 on a roll of 5, etc. For three attacks, the roll determines the timing of the middle attack. The first comes at most 3 segments earlier, but not before the first segment (the third attack is determined as for two attacks above). Spellcasters begin to cast a spell on the first segment, unless the material components are not to hand.

Dave Morris, Wandsworth, London: Just one thing to add to Dave Buttery's remarks on *Lankhmar* (WD78); the *size* of the place. As mapped by TSR, it only covers about 150 acres. Even assuming a population density of 200 per acre (very high for the equivalent historical period), then that still gives us an overall population within the walls of 30,000 people. This is pretty small in comparison to, say, Syracuse or Alexandria in classical times. I suppose the air heads will say it is only a game, blah, blah ....

All the same, I wouldn't want to put anyone off buying *Lankhmar*. I imagine the Lankhmar of the stories to be a very different and larger place, but this is still the best thing I've ever seen from TSR.

That's it for another issue, except that Ellan Lee is going to allow me to lay one more ghost to rest.

Ellan Lee, Glasgow: Now, just hold your cold ones, guys. What with all these changes going on, I'm getting very worried about the future of (y)our magazine. A new editorial team, a new look - even a new title??!! Come back Ian Livingstone, all is forgiven.

Seriously, if all these other changes have to be implemented, at least keep the name of our beloved Dwarf. Otherwise I may have to start reading *Warlock* instead ....

Ian was kidding in WD76, honest. Change WD's name? It'd be silly to do it now, just when Pete Tamlyn is about to buy the title? Of course, he might decide to rename it **The Acolyte** *but that's all months away ....*

Letters edited by Paul Cockburn

PSI JUDGES

*In the **Judge Dredd RPG**, specialist Psi-Judges are arguably the most intriguing and enjoyable characters you can play. In this article, **Carl Sargent** looks at the psychology of these mavericks, at aspects of game balance as they affect Psi-Judges, and at their Special Abilities.*

The Psychology of the Psi-Judge

First and foremost, Psi-Judges are rarities, freaks, mavericks. Psi talents are rare in Mega-City One, and the attitude of judicial authority to people with psi talents is ambivalent. More than one psyker has been subjected to neurosurgery to eradicate his abilities and Psi-Judges will not be unaware of this. On the other hand, Psi-Judges are greatly valued by authority, as they can be of unequalled use in the very toughest cases Judges ever have to face (notably, in facing the Dark Judges). Still, Psi-Judges know the highest authorities — and their other fellow Judges — are unsure of them, and this must affect the way they feel about their role.

As Psi-Judges are rare, they are in some sense outsiders; yet they pry into the minds of others continually. And what they find there is usually evil, depraved, corrupt. All this, plus their fellows' ambivalent attitudes to them, could easily lead to them becoming severely alienated people, and this is reflected in their unconventional personalities. To stave off the depression and despair which could be produced by these pressures, most Psi-Judges are flippant, wisecracking, irreverent (who but Judge Anderson could get away with saying goodbye to Dredd with the line "See you later, adjudicator"?), even hypomanic. These traits are necessary survival mechanisms, and even the SJS recognises this. It is very rare for a Psi-Judge to be hassled by the SJS over lax law-keeping, for example. Psi-Judges are under pressures other Judges cannot understand and due allowances are made. It is even rumoured that Psi-Judges have a dark secret known only to them, the Chief Justice and head of the SJS, and the few Med-Judges involved in a supervisory role. Every so often the pressures on a Psi-Judge build

up to such a level of tension that therapeutic psi-storming sessions are needed, where Psi-Judges liberate dammed-up psychic energy and tensions in an uncontrolled manner, through telekinetic actions, illusion generation and similar release mechanisms. If this rumour has any basis of truth, it is one of Mega-City One's best-kept secrets.

Psi-Judges have one other outstanding feature: they are physically weak. In the JD game, if the dice have been honestly rolled, over 90% of player character Psi-Judges will have S=1. This means they are extremely vulnerable. One Wound means automatic exclusion from many adventures and while the chance of death from one Wound may be small, the cumulative chances of getting croaked by a successful hit get depressingly high after a while. This has ramifications for game balance, as we'll see, but it must affect the psychology of the Psi-Judge too. Psi-Judges should be defensive, cautious, concerned more with their physical safety than most other Judges. Although the *Judge's Book* notes GMs should award EPs for "being a good, brave Judge", Psi-Judges should *not* be brave. They won't be cowards, but going in with Lawgiver blazing is, frankly, a dumb way for Psi-Judges to behave. They are too valuable to be wasted like this! Note also Psi-Judges' awareness of their physical vulnerability will, if anything, only add to their darkly-humorous wisecracking.

Role-playing of Psi-Judges should reflect the tensions, the concerns for physical safety, the outsider status of these people. In the 22nd Century world of Mega-City One, Psi-Judges really *are* strangers in a strange land.

Game Balance with Psi-Judges

Here, I'll look at the problem of the physical vulnerability of Psi-Judges as it affects game balance. In my experience, at least, the viability of Judges with S=1 is rather weak, if they get involved in shoot-outs or have to make many dice rolls to avoid falling off moving Lawmasters and the like. With S=1, as noted, one Wound means exclusion from many adventures due to a need for hospitalization. Such Judges are all too easily taken out by the one single bad dice roll. Now, for players this is a shame — a character shouldn't be so vulnerable to such effects arising from *one* piece of bad luck — and players will get frustrated if their Psi-Judges are sidelined too much. Within the world of Mega-City One, such extreme physical vulnerability might well lead Justice Central to be very wary of ever letting Psi-Judges out on regular street patrolling duties. They are too rare to expose to the danger of getting blown away by some two-bit punk with a stub gun. But, of course, the players want their Psi-Judges out there, earning EPs!

This is quite a problem, but there are three ways around this which occur on first reflection. One is to revise the determination of S rolls for Judges so no Judges have S=1. This is too drastic an option for me to feel happy with; it would alter the game's whole balance quite dramatically. A second option would be to make Judges harder to hit at all by plugging an odd gap in the JD rules. Judges wear head and limb armour, although we are told in the *Judge's Book* (p257) that "perps may wear it over other areas too." Psi-Judges could go around at least with the extra additional protection of chest armour (the futuristic equivalent of the contemporaneous bullet-proof vest). This, again would have to be an option open to all Judges, thus affecting game balance rather dramatically unless a compensating penalty could be found which ordinary Judges would find limiting, but which Psi-Judges could live with. So these first two options mith not be advisable courses of action for the GM.

The third option is to build some protection into the game against the pitfalls of having S=1 which is *only* available to Psi-Judges. It becomes obvious the only way of doing this is by designing some additional Special Ability related to PS, so that it is only available to Psi-Judges. One such ability, Metabolic Control, is described at the end of the next section, which fills in some details for Special Abilities for Psi-Judges that GMs might wish to consider as optional rule modifications.

There remains one important aspect to be the case, within the rules, that Psi-Judges can be psi-immune, since initial PS score, and the 10% immunity chance, are rolled separately. If the GM has already increased the physical resilience of Psi-Judges with some extra rules, then a psi-immune Pis-Judge is going to be *too* powerful. Indeed, the very possibility of Psi-Judges being psi-immune seems distinctly dodgy on theoretical grounds. I would suggest GMs consider seriously that any Judge with a PS-related Special Ability *cannot* also be psi-immune. make the 10% roll for immunity only after all other stats have been rolled, and dispense with it if the character qualifies for specialist Psi-Judge or a PS-based Special Ability and the player takes this option.

Special Abilities for Psi-Judges

GMs might wish to consider the following suggested guidelines for use of Special Abilities by Psi-Judges; these are only suggestions, of course, and GMs will be aware that extra details about these abilities can be found in the *GM's Book* which supplement those in the *Judge's Book*. My aim is to sharpen up certain aspects of how these abilities might be used in actual play, so that GMs and players have a clearer idea of exactly what they can, and can't do with them.

Animate Corpse

I think it is implicit in the rules, but the GM might make this an explicit rule, that only *one* corpse can be controlled by a Psi-Judge at any one time. The corpse should not be permitted to use any Special Abilities it possessed in its former life, since it no longer has the intelligence to deploy them. Likewise, the GM may care to rule that while the corpse can rely on matter-of-fact queries, any query calling for a judgement to be made or viewpoint to be expressed (such as "What do you think Norbert the Gink is doing right now?") will simply confuse the zombie-like intelligence remaining and the corpse will be unable to reply.

Detect Intent

As noted in the rulebooks, this is a vaguely defined ability and its application calls for much thought on the GM's part. It might be ruled to operate differently in interrogation situations on the one hand and on the streets on the other.

If the ability is being used in an interrogation exercise, then the Psi-Judge rolls against PS to exercise the ability as usual. However, the target receives a roll against its PS to resist. The Psi-Judge can try again, after a 10 Turn delay, but the second attempt will be made with a −10% modifier (or +10% to the target's resistance chances). Likewise, after another 10 Turn delay, if the Psi-Judge has had no luck so far, a third attempt with a −20% modifier can be made. After this time, however, the Psi-Judge cannot succeed in overcoming the target's resistance no matter how many more attempts are made (the target has learned how to defend itself successfully against the Psi-Judge; but a different Psi-Judge could try with normal chances). Without such a system, the Psi-Judge is *certain* to succeed eventually; with such a system the odds are in the Psi-Judge's favour, but there's a chance the target won't crack.

There's also the matter of *what* the Psi-Judge learns — and the issue of timing. Although the ability can only be used once per 10 Turns there seems to be no reason why the link cannot persist indefinitely once it has been established, within the rules as they stand. These issues can potentially be dealt with at one stroke. It may be ruled that the Psi-Judge will automatically detect general aspects of the target's mind, and predominant thoughts (the GM will have to decide what these are). However, if the Psi-Judge is searching for something specific in the target's mind which isn't predominant (eg, the numeric code for deactivating a bomb or some such) then the Psi-Judge has to roll against PS to detect this successfully. If any such PS roll is failed, the link between the Psi-Judge's mind and that of the target is broken. However, once the link *has* been successfully established, the Psi-Judge may re-establish it after a 10 Turn delay if a roll against his PS is successful (this time, the target cannot resist).

These suggestions call for interpretation by the GM as to what might be 'predominant' in the target's mind and so on, but this nebulous ability can't be played without *some* such decisions being made!

Again, while this ability is *usually* used for this kind of interrogation, where truth drugs and the like haven't worked, such scenarios don't exhaust the possible uses of the ability. It can also be used on the streets; eg, in surveillance of perps holed up in a deserted block, or something similar. I suggest that in such situations the ability should be active; ie, the player must state his Psi-Judge is using the ability (making it unlike **Sense Perps** or **Sense Hidden Weapon**, for example). For game balance, I suggest target does *not* get a chance to resist unless a Psyker (since the probe is not in any way an attack and the target won't be expecting it), but the GM might consider giving the

target a roll against its PS to understand that someone, or something, is probing its mind. Likewise, all the Psi-Judge will detect is the general personality and predominant thoughts of the target (this is not as precise as an interrogation situation). If there are potential multiple targets within range and the Psi-Judge cannot specifically nominate one, the GM may wish to rule that the Psi-Judge detects the nearest perp (although the Psi-Judge may be able to say, "I'm trying to get whoever's in that warehouse/apartment/etc" which will narrow the field down a bit). This PS-related Special Ability is the one which gives GMs and players most problems; hopefully GMs will find the suggestions here useful in designing their own supplementary rules for its use.

Detect Psyker

Since Psyker perps are fairly rare, the restriction on this ability that a Psi-Judge may only detect a Psyker actively using his powers on the same Combat Round seems rather mean. It might be worth extending. GMs might rule for example, that a Psi-Judge can detect the Psyker up to one Turn after the Psyker has been using some psi power, but with a −20% modifier; the Psyker leaves some 'psychic trace' which the Psi-Judge can pick up on. Thus a Psi-Judge arriving just after some psi ability has been in use can detect that fact; but if picking up a trace, the Psi-Judge will need a second roll against PS (again with a −20% modifier) to detect the strength of the Psyker source.

Also, if more than one Psyker has been active, the Psyker with the strongest Ps might be ruled to be the one detected specifically, although the GM might rule that Psi-Judge may also detect that more than one Psyker has recently been active (or is active) within the Sector range for the ability.

Hold Door

As I understand this, the door will remain held in perpetuity if the Psi-Judge remains within the Sector and doesn't use one of the range of Special Abilities listed in the *Judge's Book*. This doesn't seem too likely. The Gm may care to rule that, even if no other circumstances negate this effect, the holding effect will begin to dissipate after 20 Turns, with the maximum duration of the effect in Game Turns being (20+PS score of the Psyker). Thus a Psi-Judge with a PS of 80 could maintain the holding effect for 100 turns, maximum duration. Sometimes such time limits could be important!

Illusions

The GM should take care to advise players that not only illusions which paralyze targets for two rounds can be created; illusory objects can also be created. If an illusory object can also be created. if an illusory walkway across a gap of some kind (with a steep drop below) was created, then there is no reason why anyone viewing it would be transfixed for two rounds unable to do anything (of course no Psi-Judge would create an illusion like this but some nasty little Psyker might). Such illusions should also be subject to 'decay' effect like that suggested for *Hold Door* above.

PSI JUDGES

Jinx Vehicle

There's a problem here. It may be that the Psi-Judge will have to make a roll for Control Loss if he can't see the vehicle, and normally such rolls are made against DS. In this case, however, the Psi-Judge's control of the vehicle is psi-based, so the kind of skills (eye-hand co-ordination, balancing, etc) which comprise DS don't seem relevant. Perhaps a roll against PS should be made when a Control Loss is required; or against the average of DS and PS, since the GM might consider that even with psi control some knowledge of how to drive things remain relevant!

Psychic Attack

There is a slight glitch in the rules here. The description states that if the attack is successful "damage is scored as from a hand-to-hand hit" and the following example illustrates a successful attack for which damage is rolled on a d6. However, damage is normal hand-to-hand combat is *not* rolled on a d6, it is rolled on a d4 (with additional damage equal to the Judge's S score). However the d6 determination of damage should be retained, since the Psi-Judge's physical strength can hardly be relevant with a psychic attack.

Players of Psi-Judges should also be aware that (as mentioned in the *GM's Book* but not, oddly, in the *Judge's Book*) all successful hits with a Psychic Attack are head hits!

Super-Telekinesis/Telekinesis

There appears to be something of an oversight in the rulebooks; while the weight of objects you can move, how far they can be moved, and where they go is described, no range for the operation of the abilities is specified! I suggest that the range should be 1 metre per PS point for Telekinesis and 2 metres per PS point for Super-telekinesis. Note that at the extreme limits of the applicable ranges, both the directions in which objects can move and how far they can go may be affected by the range limit for operation of the ability.

GMs should feel free to test these optional rules additions and modifications for play balance and devise their own changes to suit their own campaigns. So, now for the suggested additional Special Ability, a blessing to all those Psi-Judges worrying over that feeble Strength score ....

Metabolic Control

This new Special Ability involves paranormal control over internal physical forces in the body, just as telekinesis involves control over external forces. A Psyker with this ability can minimise such effects as bleeding, hydrostatic shock, etc, contingent upon successful hits made upon him in combat. The ability is not excercised by voluntary effort; it operates as a mental reflex whenever a successful hit is made upon the Psyker. When the ability is operational, the effects of hits may be avoided; this chance is equal to one-half the Psyker's PS. *All* such effects (Wounds, Stuns, Initiative Loss) may be so affected. If the hit is severe enough to cause multiple effects (eg, a Stub gun hit causing a Wound, Stuns and Initiative Loss), then more than one roll against PS will need to be made, starting with the most serious effect (ie, Wounds). Any PS roll failure along the line means the less serious effects will automatically affect the Psi-Judge. If *two* Wounds might be sustained from the hit, a roll against PS must be made for each. Further, chest and abdomen wounds — if sustained — can produce further wounds, but where such a second wound would normally develop, a roll against PS may be allowed to prevent the formation of that additional wound. However, since this ability influences immediate reflexes and the like, a Psi-Judge possessing it will not recover from sustained wounds and so on more rapidly than any other Judge when appropriate medical treatment is given.

Note that this Special Ability is a deeply engrained defensive reflex and it will operate even if the Psi-Judge has used some other Special Ability during that combat round. However, no PS-based Special Ability can be exercised for the remainder of the Combat Round during which the ability of Metabolic Control was used. Further, if Metabolic Control was required to avoid a Wound affecting the Psyker, then the psi power utilised is so great that no PS-based Special Ability (other than Metabolic Control itself) can be used for a further 3 Combat Rounds, and the Psyker's PS will drop by 20 points during that time, recovering to its normal limit at the rate of 2 points per round thereafter.

Note for GMs: To maintain game balance, it is advisable that two further rulings be introduced. First, this Special Ability is only available to Psi-Judges with a PS of 50 or above. Thus, only Psi-Judges can ever possess this Special Ability, never an ordinary Judge who has boosted his PS to the 40 limit. This ability is specifically designed for weak, vulnerable psi-Judges! Second, Metabolic Control does ***not*** *protect the Psi-Judge against the effects of* ***Psychic Attack****, since this is a mental attack and* ***Metabolic Control*** *is designed as a reflex protection against direct physical damage attacks).* □

Play it again, Frodo

Still confused by role-playing? Having trouble convincing your 'serious' friends that you don't dress up in a frock and wave a plastic sword? Dave Langford shows how closely role-playing and literature are entwined ....

My awesome assignment is to say a few words about the joys of role-playing. "Some wallies out there," explained your esteemed and tolerant editor, "think role-playing games are nothing but throwing hordes of complicated dice and sticking four-foot broadswords into innocent bystanders."

"Aren't they?" I asked. "Ouch," I added. "Of course I'll write about role-playing," I concluded, laughing heartily at the way his four-foot broadsword wittily pricked me in the jugular.

We'll pass over the regrettable fact that my most impassioned role-playing efforts are the (not yet perfected) sobriety simulations which I act out when the pubs close. Let's approach the subject in a roundabout way:

Have you ever joined in audience shouts of *Behind you!* as a pantomime villain twirls his moustachios behind the goodie's maddeningly oblivious back? After reading a comic in which Superman diverts the orbit of Earth, uproots mountain ranges, and bursts noisily through the light barrier, only to fall victim to dreaded kryptonite .... have you sniffed, "I could do better than that"? Are you irritated when the heroine of a traditional thriller obeys the mysterious unsigned note saying "Meet me next to the bottomless well at midnight, don't tell anyone where you're going, and be sure to tie a 56-pound weight around your neck"?

The essence of role-playing is to scratch this particular itch by entering a 'narrative' and doing it *your* way (of course the resulting fantasy, though fun, may not prove as artistically plotted as Tolkien's). Here are some familiar scenarios as they might be perverted in role-players' hands. Your editor, never responsible for contributors' excesses, considers himself specially irresponsible for these.

★

"Hellfire!" erupted Thomas Covenant, his raw, self-inflicted nostrils clenching in white hot, stoical anguish while his gaunt, compulsory visage knotted with fey misery. His lungs were clogged with ruin. A hot, gelid, fulvous tide of self-accusation dinned in his ears: *leper outcast unclean* .... To release the analystic refulgence, the wild magic of the white gold ring he wore, could conceivably shatter the Arch of Time, utterly destroy the Land, and put a premature, preterite end to the plot!

Yet what other way was there? The argute notion pierced his mind like a jerid. Only thus could the unambergrised malison of Lord Foul be aneled. Only thus. Hellfire and damnation!

At that point he was struck by a swift, sapid lucubration. "But I don't believe in the Land," he shrieked with sudden caducity, lurching and reeling as though from an overdose of clinquant roborant. "So even if it's utterly destroyed .... what's the odds? I'm a leper, I can do what I like."

With an effort, he unclenched his teeth and took the aegis of his cynosure. On his hand, the white gold ring began to flare darkly .... "Hang on a moment," said Lord Foul nervously. "Perhaps we could negotiate on this?"

★

G'rot gazed up lovingly into the whirling, polychromatic eyes of his great bronze dragon. "You can do it, can't you, Filth?" he said proudly.

"Do what, G'rot?" asked Vanilla suspiciously.

G'rot gulped a flagon of Benden wine before answering. "As we Dragonriders of Pern have discovered, our wonderful dragons are not only telepathic and able to fly instantly *between* from one place to another, they can also fly *between* times."

Flattery .... I love it, said Filth smugly.

"Tell me something I don't know, or I'll scratch your eyes out," snapped the lovely but peevish Vanilla.

G'rot sighed. "Well, you'll also remember our song *The Ballad of Moron, Dragonlady of Pern*, in which the lovely but wilful Moron comes to a sticky end thanks to flying too much overtime. My idea's this: why don't I and Filth fly back in time to prevent this stupid tragedy by kidnapping Moron just before her last, fatal flight?"

"Take me with you, G'rot, or I'll kick you right in your undeveloped masculinity," retorted lovely but bitchy Vanilla.

"All in good time," said G'rot. "Ouch!"

"The only problem," mused lovely but foul-tempered Vanilla, "is that if we do this to her great tragedy plot, Anne McCaffrey is going to be a bit upset ...."

★

Fifty plate-armoured men confronted him at the door of the throne room, but Conan struck full upon them with a deafening crash of steel and spurting of blood. Swords leapt and flickered like flame. His blade tore through bodies as it might have torn through a doner kebab, ripping them open from spine to groin to broken breastbone to shattered shin. Then Conan was through, leaping over the steaming welter of blood and entrails which scant moments before had called itself the picked guard of the Supreme Emperor. Only one torn and rent survivor howled like a dying wombat as he clawed at the crimson stump that had been his nose.

Then it was the Emperor's turn. Cravenly, Ming the Merciless cowered back against his throne as Conan's blade sang towards him. His foul sorceries and mirror-mazes were of no avail against the avenging Cimmerian!

"Why, why?" the Emperor wailed as the sabre sank to its hilt and far beyond in his vile, overfed belly.

"Dialectical analysis of historical change inevitably predicts

the decay of lickspittle capitalist imperialism and its replacement by enlightened socialist collectives," Conan grunted.

★

Despite the wonderful sunshine and their wonderful victory over the terrible White Witch, Edmund couldn't help talking about some things he'd learned in Scripture class at his progressive school.

"It's like this," he said, thinking hard. "According to the consensus of modern theologians, God never actually shows up in person (except in Thomas Covenant books), because if you *know* God exists, then having faith without actual proof wouldn't be much of a virtue any more. In other words, providential manifestations are actually detrimental to religious faith!"

"It's very clever of you to remember all that," said Lucy.

The great, golden Lion gave a worried growl. "I really hadn't thought of that, child. I'll have to check with Head Office about current policy . . . ."

And Aslan slunk furtively out of Narnia.

★

"On second thoughts," said Gandalf, "these are matters higher and deeper and darker than hobbits in their small Shire can know. Perilous though it may be, I must make trial of it for at least a little time. Frodo, kindly lend me the Ring . . . ."

★

His course of action was clear. It was simply a matter of split-second timing: ducking the poisoned arrows, leaping lithely between the rotating knives, dodging under the arching cataract of molten lava, fording the piranha-infested lake, sprinting through the blazing refinery, using guile to sidestep the crazed onslaught of the entire Sioux nation, taking advantage of available cover in the ground-level nuclear test zone, holding his breath for the final dash through the airless vacuum of space, and triumphantly seizing the prize before nonchalantly returning by the same route.

"On the other hand," thought Indiana Jones, "I could always buy a new hat."

★

A surge of strange, eerie power thrilled up through Arthur's arm as he laid hand on the sword's mighty hilt. The words of Merlin boomed again in his mind: *Whoso shall draw the sword from the stone shall be rightful King of all England* . . . .He pulled – and smooth as butter, the sword slid from the deep cleft where enchantment had locked it for so long.

Arthur looked at the gleaming blade with awe. The prophecy was fulfilled at last. He cried out aloud:

"Kay! Kay! I did it! I've drawn Merlin's sword from the stone! I'm the rightful King of England!"

"Another bloody sexist role-playing game," muttered his sister Kay (a founder subscriber to *Spare Rib*). "You might at least have let me have first try – even if Merlin does insist on discriminating against queens."

★

I've just **wheeze** had an idea," said Darth Vader in his hoarse whisper (he wished there were some way to get throat pastilles through the awesome helmet). "Rather than **wheeze* sending attack ships to follow those silly people along the trench in the Death Star's surface, why don't we **wheeze* move the Star away from them under its own power, and **wheeze* have a go at them with the planet-busting doomsday weapons?"

"No need," murmured the Grand Moff Tarkin. "As soon as it became evident that the 'weak spot' in our defences had been spied out, I took the opportunity of ordering a slight modification to the Death Star's sewage outlet trench. Observe."

As the *Millennium Falcon* shrieked towards its goal, a terrific barrage of laser fire crackling and exploding on every side

despite the lack of sound in the vacuum of space . . . . Han Solo screamed.

"In space, no one can hear you scream," said Chewbacca reprovingly.

Ahead, blocking the narrow way entirely, was a vast brick wall carrying the airbrushed slogan BYE-BYE, SUCKERS.

With microseconds to go before oblivion, the entire crew shouted: "Luke! *Use the Force!*"

Dutifully, Luke Skywalker shut his eyes . . . .

★

They descended a thousand dank steps below the shuddering sub-cellar of the strange high house whose gambrel roof brooded over the oldest quarter of time-cursed Arkham. The fitful light of the gibbous moon sent no rays into this fungus-ridden abyss, where blackened and disfigured stonework was tortured into eldritch, cyclopean geometries, as though wrought by some race of nameless abominations which frothed in primal slime for unhallowed aeons before the birth of mankind.

"These stairs", whispered Marcus Whateley, "are *of no human shape*."

"What do you see?" said his companion, holding the lantern high. The crumbled, blasphemous vault was heaped with evilly mouldering tomes, their mere covers a threat to sanity. An unnameable, charnel stench pervaded the nauseous air, seemingly a foul exhalation from some abominable lavatory of the Great Old Ones themselves.

Trembling, Whately stooped to peer at the awful texts. "Great God," he croaked in a paralysed voice. "Here are copies of the sinister *Liber Ivonis*, the infamous *Cultes des Ghoules* of the Comte d'Erlette, von Junzt's hellish *Unaussprechlichen Külten*, and Ludvig Prinn's remaindered *De Vermiis Mysteriis*. The forbidden *Pnakotic Manuscripts*, the unreadable *Book of Dzyan* . . . and there, see! Bound in human skin, nothing less than the abhorred *Necronomicon* of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred!"

There was a terror-laden pause before the eldritch reply smote upon Whately's fear-crazed ears –

"We've got all those: can you see a copy of *White Dwarf 1*?"

★

"That's not what I meant at all," thundered the Editor. "Role-playing games are *serious*."

"Oh, are they?" said Langford . . . his last words.

gobbledigook.
KREEPS
SKULKS
A Goblin from a neighboring tribe catches Gook's eye....
A kreep!... ugly too!
WOT You Bloggin' starin' at kreep!?
WAK!
Yuk yuk STILL TEACH 'IM
Later on....
OH!
UH?
Nobody hassles a kreep n gets away wiv it!
Gook reports to the chief..
YUR.. It wuz dem kreeps... lotz of em too!
can't let kreeps do dat to a SKULK! We gonna show 'em good 'n Proper!!
..so at a kreep camp later...
hoo kreepies - catch!
OH?
EE-YAR!
WHOMP!
..and back at Skulk base
Yuk yuk yuk.. We Showed dem goz-dink't kreeps!
..but..
Quick Quick Kreeps! lots 'n lots a Kreeps... comin' 'ere!
HUT! HUT!
WAK!
CRUNCH!
AAAAAAARRR
KILLKILLKILLKILL
CHOP!
SPLAT
until...
AAOOOARR
but suddenly...
YOU!
WOT THU ZOG ARE You STARN AT?!!
'Ee's not .....'e wuz BORN dat way!....
'OH'
BiL

FRACAS!

On The Road Again

You saw it here first! The spate of transfers from TSR to GW continues unabated. Following Tom Kirby and the editor of this esteemed magazine up the A1, the GW Removals service can now reveal that Jim Bambra and Phil Gallagher are to join the Design team in Nottingham, just in time to be drawn into the *WARPS* playtests. Jim and Phil are two-thirds of the TSR Product Development staff, responsible for the UK series of AD&D modules and various other-supplements that makes up most of the TSR list outside *Dragonlance*. Their transfer (fees were not revealed, but it is unlikely that Don Turnbull has enough to approach Man Utd for Robson's harness) leaves just Graeme Morris, 29, at TSR UK, to devise, write, typeset and paste-up the modules. Asked to comment by your intrepid reporter, Mr Morris, 62, replied: "ARRRRRRGGGGH!!!"

Speaking of *Dragonlance*, we can reveal that Tracey Hickman has left TSR Inc in the States, which means that just about everyone who has written scenario material for the D&D/AD&D games in the last year is no longer with the company. Mr Morris, 105, declined to do anything more than weep ....

You saw it here first! Development of the roleplay version of the *Warhammer* game is proceeding at a frenetic pace now that new writer/editor/coffee monitor Graeme Davis has been chained to the GW Amstrad. The system is based on a complex, though easy-in-use character generation system, which provides a pre-adventuring background for the characters, and a series of 'advances' which must be fulfilled to rise to the next 'level'. The combat system is fast, bloody and suitably chaotic, as you would expect from Rick Priestley, who wrote the critical hits table after watching late night re-runs of *Texas Chain Saw Massacre*. Although it will be fully compatible with the Battle game, there are a number of new developments which will make for exciting and bizarre adventures in a dark and brooding earth-like world. One small thing. Not everyone is convinced GW have come up with the mega-knock-'em-over title of the century in *Warhammer Advanced RolePlay System*, so WD readers are invited to send in their ideas. We hope this doesn't lead to the same flood of *Samantha Fox rpg* entries as last month's caption contest. Let's hurry up with this, guys 'n' gals, the game is supposed to be out in November.

Other soon to be released news from GW. The following products from Workshop's own trained trolls will be in your shops this summer. **July/August**: *Kings & Things* - a typically zany Tom *(Snit's Revenge)* Wham, wherein 2-6 players build empires and recruit frogs, apes, pixies, rocs and whatever to face the other players in the final battle. Ragnarok was for wimps. *Talisman The Adventure* is the follow-up to the enormously succesful original game. *Tower of Screaming Death* is a quiet, thoughtful solo scenario for *Warhammer*, with floorplans and stats for other systems. Add the *COC* hardback and some Gothick floor plans, and you'll see why steam rises over the Design Studio at night. From overseas, we have *Ghost Toasties* (£6.95), the first add-on for the *Ghostbusters rpg; Clones In Space* (£5.95) for *Paranoia; Lorien* (£5.95 - for a limited period only) for *MERP; Carse* (£6.95), which is a Chaosium city book, rather like *Thieves World* but in book format; *Duel Track* (£9.95 - for a limited period only) for *Car Wars*, and lastly, *Recon* (£9.95), the revised game of the Vietnam rpg.

Bank Roll

You saw it here first! The one thing you have always craved, but never had. From GameScience, of Gulfport, Mississippi, we have had news of the scientifically crafted d100 — the one-dice percentile generator. With the roll of a single dice, you too can be chasing this sphere across the gaming table, out through the door and into the kitchen, waiting to find out if you have made that skill roll ....

Possibly the most fascinating fact to come out of the invention of this wonderful device is the fact that the manufactuers discovered how to make dice with any number of equidistant 'faces'. What next, the d1000? In the meantime, GW will be importing a limited number of these dice (which retail at $5 in the USA). The exact number will be resolved when the sample comes to rest ....

"Look After This One 007"

The Spring list from Victory Games has some great new supplements for the *James Bond rpg. Villains* is a collection of seven of 007's most dangerous adversaries, plus details of *SMERSH. You Only Live Twice II — Back of Beyond* is a totally original adventure in which our hero must uncover a breach in the security of Q Branch. The *James Bond 007 Assault Game*, finally, is a system to enable the running of those epic systems like the assualt on the Rocket Base in *You Only Live Twice.*

Endless Games, now operating from within the TM Games range, have produced two pads of character sheets for standard frp games. The Role-Playing Character Record Sheet is aimed mostly at systems with mechanics akin to Basic Role-Playing, while the Role-Playing Character Pad is more your D&D/AD&D play aid. £1.95 for a pack of 50 sheets.

Coming soon to a Basildon near you .... Gamescon '86 will be breaking out at the Towngate Theatre, Basildon, Essex on Saturday, November 8th. Trade stands, demonstrations games and an AD&D competition. The only entry fee is for the latter (£1.50).

Feed The Multiverse

There was Band Aid, Live Aid, Sport Aid and Lucozade — now, get ready for *Dragonaid*. In the next few months, a number of events are being held under this banner (though they are not neccessarily connected), to raise funds for Africa. We have heard of two events thus far. The first is to be based on an attempt to raise the D&D Marathon record at The Centre in Adelaide Street WC2 (just behind Trafalgar Square), with a 100 hour target! The dates aren't 100% certain, but are likely to be from Friday, July 22nd for 5 days. Introductory games, a competition module, figure painting, an artshow, videos, refreshments and merchandise will be available throughout the event. All monies raised to go to Band Aid. Contact 108 Twyford House, Chisley House, London N15 for final details.

The other event is a series of six mammoth AD&D sessions at Coventry YMCA, in which the players are to get through the whole of *Dragonlance*. Sponsorship will raise money for Oxfam and Tear, and it will take place from 9.00am to 10.30pm, Monday 4th August to Friday 9th. Harry Payne, 3 Sandown Avenue, Foleshill, Coventry CV6 6EW is the man to contact (telephone (0203) 680248).

Get along for an hour to support them if you can, and sponsor them. Both these events deserve to be huge successes. Also on the cards — if we can get it together in time — will be a *GamesDay* game, a mixture of a track game and *Illuminati*, which will be designed by Chris Elliot and Richard Edwards, and developed by other folks giving of their time for free. This means that, if we can get shops, printers and other folks to cooperate, *all* the money from the cover price will go to Africa. All you've got to do is tell us what a brill idea it is, and then buy it when it comes out. Watch this space.

NOTICE TO WD & WARLOCK READERS

Following a number of complaints from readers of *White Dwarf* and *Warlock* magazines, it has come to our attention that a number of people have had difficulty in obtaining *Asgard Miniatures* by mail order from **Raven Publications**, c/o Flat 2, 14 Zulla Road, Mapperley Park, Nottingham, in answer to advertisements that have appeared in this magazine in the past.